ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO A LARGE-SCALE AGRICULTURAL PROJECT IN SUDAN

Abdel Raouf Mohamed Adam

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
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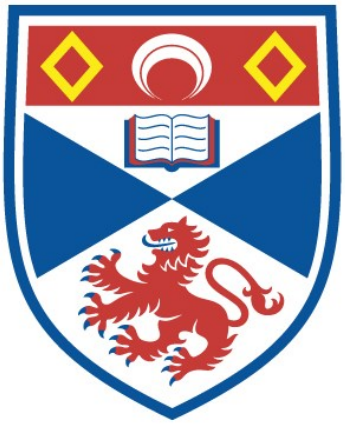

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By

Abdel Raouf Mohamed Adam

Thesis submitted for the degree of

M.Phil to the

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Aaisha and my brother, Noah

DECLARATION

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I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate to the degree of M.Phil of the University of St Andrews and that he is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Date: May 2nd 1989

Signature of Supervisor:

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with rural development in Nuba peasant communities of the Southern Kordofan region, Sudan. Peasants have always been considered by planners as scape-goats for the failure of state-designed rural development schemes in Third World societies. This plainly does not grasp the cause of such failure. The thesis argues against both the practice and theoretical foundations on which rural development planning is based. The author maintains that empirical investigation at the grassroots level is badly needed to fully grasp and explain the total situation of the indigenous communities and their forms of organisation.

The author singles out one Nuba peasant society located at Habila, where rural development is currently underway; he examines the roots of the failure of the state-initiated Habila scheme to arouse the popular participation of the poor Nuba peasants. The Nuba are primarily subsistence farmers cultivating dura, cotton, sesame, tobacco and vegetables. The majority have professed Islam, though a few are still Pagans and Christians. The thesis aims to bring to the foreground some of the socio-economic and cultural factors which have direct bearing on rural development. Underpinning the theoretical analysis are cultural and strategic perspectives relating to social action. Failure of economists to provide a sufficient explanation for the poor response of the Nuba peasants to

the cooperative schemes of Habila has stimulated such perspectives which, the author contends, are badly needed for examining development situations at the level of the local community. The author concludes that the dissolution of the traditional forms of cooperation as a result of the commercialisation of the economy is mainly responsible for the failure of the Habila cooperative schemes to attract local peasants. But, ironically the scheme itself seems to perpetuate the same problems which it aims to mitigate, included here are the trends of labour migration and the ideology of consumerism.

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INTRODUCTION

For most post-independence sub-Saharan African countries, including Sudan, the results of development planning are disappointing. Development projects, though they seem technically and economically appropriate to planners, in practice often do not work very well, from both economic and social standpoints. Indeed, significant recent strides in development thinking have culminated in a common theoretical acceptance that imposed models of social change in themselves turn to become fetters on development. More often, development schemes tend to accentuate the pre-existing trends of unequal income distribution by making the rich richer and the poor poorer. One suggested way of reversing the negative impact of schemes for improving people's quality of life is to approach local problems with a sound analytical understanding of the inter-relationship between the technical-economic and social and cultural variables in traditional communities (Hagen, 1962). Accordingly, one view holds that to have a significant impact toward achieving development objectives, planning should be capable of building on indigenous models and forms of organisation (Abdel Ghaffar, 1977b.). Nevertheless, problems continue to persist, among them the institutionalisation of the very adverse trends which development is intended to mitigate.

One of the reasons for this bleak outlook with respect to planned social change is the divergence of perspectives

concerning the appropriate solution to problems arising in respect of project implementation (Wenger, 1982). But the dominant idea in development literature, which holds that success in development schemes rests in stressing local forms of labour organisation, thus stimulating people to effectively participate in the process of development, is increasingly losing ground (Worsley, 1971). Ethnographic research has empirically established that indigenous forms of labour organisation and traditional systems of co-operation are not always conducive to modern cooperative development.

This thesis examines rural development in the peasant world from the perspective of socio-economic anthropology. It draws on one of the large-scale agricultural schemes in Sudan, the Habila scheme in the Nuba Hills area, and specifically examines its impact in respect of arousing participatory enthusiasm among local people. The thesis, however, does not purport to address the issue of rural development per se, as to how planners can most effectively bring this about. Rather, I set myself the task of isolating some of the social and cultural factors inhering in the process of development and of examining their relevance to the development process. Prominent among these factors are the bases of traditional cooperation and the indigenous practices in agriculture.

It is my contention that an anthropological understanding, or context, is absolutely necessary for appreciating the poor response of the ordinary peasant to the Habila scheme.

As such the thesis is a necessary adjunct to the comments about the scheme which have already been offered by economists and planners. In this thesis, for the first time, the considerable anthropological knowledge relating to the culture of the Nuba Hills area is brought to the foreground in explaining why the scheme failed. In general, there has been very little anthropological work, per se, on this very major example of economic development in the Sudan.

More importantly the thesis is offered as a direct response to the call by Affan (1978:45) that there should be further investigation of the disillusionment on the part of Nuba peasants with cooperative schemes - a finding of his economic research for which he fails to find an explanation.

The theoretical model adopted in the thesis is, very broadly, an actor-centred approach. As is shown in Long (1977), the importance of the actor-centred model lies in its rejection of an outsider's bias and value judgement in evaluating social situations. The limitation of the outsider's view of things is that it fails to adequately account for local people's capacity to utilise pre-existing knowledge and forms of organisation for their own economic planning (1977:135). In contrast to this, the actor-centred model purports to analytically examine the ways

people make use of local concepts in their allocational choices in the various spheres of economic activity. Understanding the context in which decisions concerning specific social choices are made is the sine qua non for explaining why individuals opt for a particular course of action when confronted with new opportunities (eg development schemes). Long maintains that individuals and groups display differential response to social change because, assessing their access to and utilisation of various kinds of resources, some are more often "strategically placed to doing so than others" (1977:135). The way of assessing or 'mapping out', to use Long's terminology, people's access to resources is plainly stated as follows:

> "One method of [documenting the ways in which groups or individuals utilise resources in novel situations] is to focus upon problematic situations that present a range of possible situations. Attention is then given to analysing why it is that certain individuals or social categories pursue particular courses of action; and to assessing the economic, organisational, and other outcomes (intended and unintended) of such decisions." (1977:135).

It is this kind of theoretical work that, in my view, is of considerable value for development planning - which aims to help formulate policies that would bring about desirable changes with minimum social cost. The importance of this work holds despite certain methodological shortcomings from concentrating on actors' perceptions. One shortcoming stems

from the fact that this model, by and large, takes a micro-view of the society in contrast to the macro-level of communities of which planners are too often concerned. On balance, the vigour of the actor-oriented analysis stems from the fact that the actor's knowledge may be inferred directly from behaviour -

> "Assuming that all actions are guided by relevant knowledge, and are meaningful to others because the actor and the others share the same notions, it follows that by observing actions (and taking into account all the accompanying statements) and by accounting for them as meaningful, the anthropologist should be able to infer the notions guiding these actions" (Holy and Stuchlik, 1983:68).

The thesis adopts the actor-oriented model, isolating some relevant social, cultural and economic factors which shape the Nuba peasants' response to the Habila scheme. The overall thrust of the thesis is that of applied anthropology. The relevance of applied anthropological research to development situations derives from the recognition on the part of the planners that understanding people's views on planned change could help provide guidelines for sound formulations. Furthermore, developers need data of a qualitative nature to supplement the quantitative and statistical data provided by economists. The availability of these two types of data (the qualitative and quantitative) is the sine qua non for sound practical action since the oral societies studied by anthropologists exhibit forms of

behaviour which encompass both economic and social aspects (Baric, 1967). In this respect, applied anthropology deals with cultures and societies in which the economic is only one aspect of human behaviour. Thus, it deals with the complex processes of commercialisation, urbanisation and modernisation that are directly related to development. According to Dalton, "these processes take place over much longer periods of time than anthropologists customarily remain in the field" (1987:373) and anthropologists must grasp them. He suggests that analysis of such processes should put into consideration "policies of central government which directly impinge on [the level of the] local group... [which] traditionally has been the focus of interest in anthropology" (1987:373).

In studying development we should define our concepts in such a way as to fit what developers purport to do with the goals and ends which local groups have in respect of development. We do this by relating local level processes to the processes of socio-economic change and consider both as an ongoing social process. According to Bastide applied anthropology is the science of man's manipulative action (1973:209). As such it is concerned not with action and planning proper but with the way planners come to interact with and affect pre-existing social relationships and structures. "It analyses that action and that planning as the old anthropology analysed kinship systems, economic and political institutions, spontaneous processes of change and with exactly the same techniques of approach" (1973:181).

This work is certainly concerned with the interaction between developers and the developed as Bastide views it and, therefore, qualifies as applied anthropology - all the more so since it contributes to an understanding which could have practical implications. The analysis adopted also has some bearing on the 'obstacles to development' school (which effectively sees indigenous institutions as physical objects) but attempts to avoid the latter's shortcomings. One shortcoming of this school lies in the fact that it is value-laden and static. We avoid this by going deeper, and investigate the conditions under which change could be both accepted and rejected. The 'obstacles to development' school does not provide for "the dynamics of traditional change and the propensity or capacity of traditions to adjust to ongoing processes and conditions" (Weintraub and Margulies 1986:41).

To empirically investigate development situations Bastide's principles of applied anthropology should be cited since they form the core of our theoretical framework. These principles could be summarised in the following four points. First, where components of a development plan are technical and economic our study should allow for comparison between the pre-existing technical and economic aspects of culture with actors' conception of the technical and economic aspects of development proposals. This helps forecast the possible local level response and reactions. Secondly, it is essential that our analysis should isolate the main general factors within the existing culture and

social system that are conducive to development; but more importantly which can, in effect, sufficiently arouse local participation in the development scheme. Thirdly, a follow-up analysis of the development project and its impact on local people should be made in each project phase to enable potential constraints to be sorted out for early prescriptions and solutions. Fourth, post-implementation assessment should be made for corrective action and re-adjustment (1973:123).

By and large our theoretical analysis focuses on processes of social change and deals with the interplay between development inputs and social values held by local people. Both developers and the developed agree on one objective: that development and improved well-being is desirable; but the two differ concerning how development should be approached. Actors in their response to external stimulus not only think of the immediate reward such change is likely to confer, but also the way the existing social relationships, or institutions may be remodelled and structured. Such change involves both economic and social costs and benefits and the actor himself is able, given that specific context, to weigh the costs and benefits before a decision or a response is made. Developers on the other hand may be entirely lacking cognizance of actors' rational behaviour in choice situations since a wide cultural gulf exists between them and the people at the grass roots. Concerning actors' response to schemes of change which turn out to be not in the interest of local people, Dalton

succinctly states that, too often -

> "having lost the primary ties of meaningful culture, social relationships and activities... and having been forced into meaningless activities and degrading helplessness, individuals and groups react to bewildering changes with fantasy, aggression, withdrawal and escape" (1987:375-6).

This highlights the fact that response of people subject to development can often diverge considerably from what planners had anticipated. With this fact well acknowledged, applied anthropological research attaches primacy to the cultural components of the society, implying that change in attitudes and values are the key to future social and economic development. This implies in turn that planned action should, a priori, define the aspects of society in which the capacity to absorb change has become manifest. This is the task of the anthropologist who works from within and who can therefore represent the actors' views on planned change. The anthropologist's study of groups and individuals is of vital importance since "it is only through the human psyche and the group that the metamorphosis of ideas into social forces can take place" (Bastide, 1973:189). A more concrete danger is that development resources may be seen by local people as being largely accessible to certain groups who can then manipulate the less advantaged for their own personal advancement. The task of the anthropologist lies, therefore, in identifying "the privileged groups and vested interest that

have to be liquidated before the model can work" (Abdel Ghaffar, 1977a:33; I demur from the tone of the word 'liquidate'). When constraints of this type are not pointed out in the pre-scheme implementation phase planners can be misled into propagating models which can unwittingly result in a situation where specific groups tend to manipulate development inputs (both human and non-human resources), and to thwart development efforts. But also where the underprivileged group is conscious enought of the adverse implications of change it is more likely that fear of manipulation provides a convincing reason why popular participation fails to be aroused.

Our anthropological analysis of the outcome of the Habila scheme implies the level of the local community, though I hope it applies more generally to the wider region. The Nuba peoples, located in the Southern Kordofan region of Sudan, notwithstanding their cultural variation, present certain common features in terms of value system and social structure. Being able to generalise the analysis is of great theoretical and practical importance. It is held that "the more general a proposition, the greater is its validity, not only theoretically ...but also as applied to a particular situation" (Bastide, 1973:125).

The different parts of the thesis are arranged such that issues of both theoretical and practical dimensions are encompassed. Chapter 1 views some contending theories of development and underdevelopment. It is shown that, con-

trary to what might appear, all these theoretical formulations embody an outsider's bias, incorporating unwarranted value judgements that could, in the end, hinder development. Being beset with objective evaluation rather than subjective expectation of alternatives, these theories are rejected. In Chapter 2, the analysis shifts to an assessment of the practice of rural development proper. The discussion follows naturally from Chapter 1 since almost all practical development models are linked to some general theoretical formulation about development. Partly due to the fact that development approaches and schemes rest with evidently fallacious theoretical underpinnings and partly because of the inherent difficulties concerning their practical fitness, an overall criticism is called for. Thus in this chapter we turn more explicitly to policy-makers and to their practical approaches to rural development and social change. The purpose is to reveal the broad theories of development 'implied' in the particular practical policies with which we are dealing. As we shall see, these planners are mostly attending to specific problems within the rural sector; therefore they are presumably subscribing to some sort of 'modernisation' theory. The various schemes mentioned in this chapter are all in sub-Saharan Africa, if not in Sudan. Of the various practical schemes presented in this chapter, the Habila scheme, to which we shall later turn, is shown to fall into the category of 'transformation' approach.

In chapter 3 ethnographic data on the Nuba Mountains region is furnished. What is presented is more or less a historical account. The purpose is to link past trends with present general tendencies and to mould the two processes into a complex whole. Detailed here are local resources and the way these resources are utilised; the system of land tenure and agricultural operations; bases of community solidarity and allegiances; processes of commercialisation of the economy; and the educational policies in the region. It is shown that the interplay of the above mentioned factors and processes gives rise to community division between local inhabitants (ie the Nuba) and the immigrant Arabs and later to a sense of identity among the Nuba which culminates in the development of political consciousness. This consciousness is manifested in the ordinary Nuba's concern to have a share in the economic and political opportunities of the country as exemplified by labour migrants' unions in towns, the desire to form cooperatives run exclusively by local inhabitants, and attitudes of scepticism towards the Arabs, officials and Jellaba traders.

Chapter 4 examines the Habila scheme proper. It is posited that this is akin in its features and aims to the 'transformation approach' since it advocates change in methods of production, as well as alterations in the type of production units (towards cooperatives), and population movements and state intervention. It is also shown how the scheme is dominated by private farmers who have vested interest in

their own individual advancement rather than the development of the local community. It is shown that the cooperative schemes play a minor role in the scheme in general and do not attract local participation. The impact of the scheme on the local population is painfully disappointing: the poor get poorer and the rich richer; there is environmental degradation and an accentuation of the processes of labour migration. The economic explanation for the low indigenous investment in peasant farming is presented. It is shown that economic factors must be complemented by the relevant social and cultural factors which directly affect agricultural performance. In Chapter 5 the social factors which affect peasant farming are isolated. These include kinship, labour migration and conspicuous consumption. Together, these are partly germane to the low investment in traditional agriculture.

Chapter 6 is a preliminary to explaining why cooperative schemes in Habila fail to attract effective local participation. It is presented to refute the implicit and erroneous assumption that the traditional system of cooperation in Nuba culture - the nafeir - provides a blue-print for modern cooperative development in the region. It is shown that the institution (ie nafeir) because of its rapid disintegration can no longer function as it traditionally did. But more important, due to the persistence of the trends which led to its dissolution, it fails to provide a blueprint for modern cooperatives as the people themselves have, in the contemporary context, developed a

negative attitude toward joining a nafeir. In line with other anthropologists we argue that the commercialisation of the local economy and the presence of alien groups seemingly manipulating local groups for their own advancement had precipitated the disintegration of the nafeir system.

In chapter 7 the importance of building on local institutions as a pre-requisite for rural development is examined. Here an extrapolative analysis is adopted to allow comparison and generalisation from other contexts. We show that traditional institutions are not always amenable to development since local people hold perceptions about the social and economic costs of participating in schemes imposed from outside. Thus, we conclude that for a traditional system of cooperation to be successfully incorporated into modern cooperatives, minimisation of the social costs concomitant with so-called 'modernisation values' is necessary. This necessitates an empirical anthropological investigation of what constitutes a social cost from an actor's perspective. With regard to the Nuba Hills area we infer that the lack of receptivity among local people derives from an impending fear that aliens manipulate them for individual self-interest.

CHAPTER 1

Theories of Development and Underdevelopment: An Overview

The various theories concerned with development in Third World countries can be broadly divided into two main camps. Modernisation theories on the one hand, and dependency and articulation-of-modes on the other. The significance of these theories lies in the fact that policy-makers, whatever their ideological orientations, are tempted to invoke them to legitimise their formulations (Wenger, 1982): one can hardly imagine a government policy that has been established independently of pre-existing theoretical orientations. Indeed such theoretical concepts advocated by professionals are taken to provide the essential framework for national decision-making processes. In this regard Long can appositely remark:

> "Hence both the planning process and the study of socio-economic change rests upon sets of ideas, assumptions and methodologies which derive from the sort of macro-theoretical orientations mentioned earlier" (Long, 1977:8).

In this chapter an endeavour is made to touch on some of the recent critiques of the contending development theories. The critique should establish that the underlying assumptions and the theoretical framework on which such theories rest are both deficient and, as a result,

cannot serve the purpose of development as we view it. Their deficiency is that they overstress planners views about development rather than local concepts themselves.

The Critique of Modernisation Theories

The modernisation school derives its theoretical tenet from the ideal-typical constructs which characterise both traditional and present-day advanced societies. It describes modernisation with reference to present-day conditions of western advanced countries. Thus, Moore (1963) defines modernisation as -

> "a 'total' transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into the types of technology and associated social organisation that characterises 'advanced', economically prosperous, and relatively politically stable nations of the Western World" (in Long, 1977:9).

The implications of such a definition is that for less developed societies to develop it is essential that modern technology be diffused to effect structural differentiation in their traditional systems. The move towards modernity is conceived of as a unilinear process akin to the one that had characterised present-day western societies in the early sixteenth century. Basically, the process of modernisation takes presumably three stages: differentiation, adaptation and integration into a new structure (Smelser, 1967:30). Smelser argues that a host of disturbances occur in the different aspects of the social structure in the

modernisation process. Social relationships change from face-to-face and personal to purely impersonal ones. In the sphere of politics the traditional chieftainship system gradually becomes superceded by modern bureaucracy. The family system based on extensive kinship connections gives way to an atomised nuclear type. Social behaviour becomes increasingly oriented toward rational calculations of material benefits and rewards. And the marketplace with its traditional spheres of exchange is substituted with new elaborate marketing institutions.

This ideal-typical construction merely describes the main features which a modernising society is likely to assume in the modernising process. Moreover, depicting the process as universal reduces the whole notion of modernity to absurdity, for the simple fact that change often takes place in a particular aspect of the social structure without revolutionising the rest of the component parts. For example, change in the family structure in a number of Third World countries has never been followed by rapid urbanisation or industrialisation.

The traditional/modern dichotomy implies the entire separation of modern sectors 'commanded by corresponding elites', and traditional subsistence sectors (Fitzgerald, 1983:14). The neglect of the interconnection of the two sectors, and also of the wider national and international context led the so-called dependency theorists to question the validity of such assumptions. For example, Fitzgerald states the

following:

> "This master conception [of universal societal evolution] focuses on the nation as its primary unit of analysis and thereby ignores the international context which is so crucial to any understanding of historical development and current realities in the Third World" (1983:15).

The point which modernisation theorists fail to recognise is that modernisation inputs bear with them modernisation values. If imported modernisation components are to fit into the values and social organisations of the receiving societies, then it follows that the values of the receiving and giving societies should not be in conflict. Indeed concern has recently been voiced about the relevance of imported technology and its concomitant values to the conditions of Third World countries (Meir, 1969; Schumacher, 1973; Johnston, 1979). Economists on the one hand have raised the issue of appropriateness as regards the technology for transforming traditional agriculture in late developing countries. Eckaus, for instance, suggests that the role of technological change in underdeveloped countries should lie in providing modern technologies "especially adapted to their resources and conditions" (1962:122) since most of the imported technology has been developed in and for advanced countries. Anthropologists on the other hand, are keen to note the so-called "differential response" to planned change and innovation (Long, 1977:105). It is argued in this connnection that even

within the local society there can be found individuals or groups (entrepreneurs) who are strategically better located than are other strata to apply themselves more vigorously to economic matters and to respond positively to innovation. Those who lack such attributes are more likely to display a poor response to economic advantage. Also critical of modernisation theory, Marxists are prone to see foreign aid as a mechanism for actually syphoning off the resources of the borrowing traditional countries. Thus the different kinds of linkages between advanced capitalist countries and poor developing countries are judged sufficient by so-called underdevelopment theorists to consider Third World formation as working under the aegis of one system of production and reproduction, viz, the international capitalist system (see below).

Yet another difficulty with modernisation theory is its failure to provide for redistribution. Where efforts are actively made on the part of national governments in Third World countries to improve the well-being of the populations result in economic growth, the benefits of the latter tend to accrue to a minority of progressive elites to the detriment of the underprivileged. As a consequence, the poor get poorer and the rich richer. In such a situation we can hardly speak of the 'total' structural transformation postulated by modernisation theory as the concomitant of differentiation. We therefore, need to look anthropologically at political relations in the receiving community.

Finally, and more importantly, the assumption that traditional social structures are inimical to modernisation has recently been questioned by promoters of rural development. Intensive research is now underway considering the possibility of implementing development projects within the context of rural social structures. Tradition is no longer to be viewed as opposed to modernity. Indeed, the "dichotomy of traditional and modern, and the inimical relations between them vitiate any attempt to understand what is being transformed and in which directions" (Ostor and Fruzzett, 1978:7-8). Western professional writings are legitimated by western ideology which in turn blinds them from discerning the peculiarities of non-western countries. The conditions under which present-day advanced countries found their way to modernity are, furthermore, widely different from that of late developing countries. The dependency school addresses the above questions to show that analysis must be based on "a clear, conception of differential patterns of national evolution and their structural interrelatedness at the world level" (Fitzgerald, 1983:15).

The Critique of Dependency Theory

As an alternative to modernisation theories the dependency or underdevelopment school is founded on the premise that both present-day Third World Societies and the advanced western capitalist world are a product of mercantile capitalism's colonial and imperialist policies. Historically, the relationship between the two, it is argued, is but one of political and economic dominance of

the developed over the underdeveloped. For that reason Third World countries' relationship with the capitalist world should in fact be viewed as one of development of the latter and the simultaneous underdevelopment of the former; and labels such as undeveloped, as applied to Third World, hardly describe this situation (Frank, 1967; Dos Santos, 1969; Cardoso, 1972; Baran, 1957). This state of affairs is described by Dos Santos (1969) as follows:

> "Dependence is a conditioning situation in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others. A relationship of interdependence between two or more economies or between such economies and the world trading system becomes a dependent relationship when some countries expand through self-impulsion while others, being in a dependent position, can only expand as a reflection of the expansion of the dominant countries, which may have positive or negative effects on their immediate development. In either case, the basic situation of dependence causes these countries to be both backward and exploited" (in Long, 1977:87).

Directing their criticism mainly at the concept of diffusion, underdevelopment theorists are apt to characterise the relationship between 'underdeveloped' and 'advanced' countries as a double-edged process. Diffusion is seen as imperialism's tool for exploiting newly independent Third World countries. Proponents of this school, including Amin, Arrighi, Baran, Frank and

Wallerstein, et al, postulate a chain of satellite-metropoles connecting the remotest areas in Third World formations with the most advanced capitalist countries. As a result of this linkage, it is argued, surplus product produced in the underdeveloped countries is progressively appropriated by capitalist countries who dominate the latter (Limqueco and MacFarlane, 1983).

A sweeping argument is too often made by underdevelopment theorists that development in Third World rural communities is doomed to fail: communities on the receiving end of so-called development inputs in fact experience increasing underdevelopment because they lack the control of their development resources (Fitzgerald 1983:16).

The explanation of this process lies in the weak economic and political bargaining position of Third World countries in their exchange relationship with international capitalism. Looked at from this viewpoint, the structures of both countries are no longer to be considered as separable from one another. Rather they are fused into a whole world capitalist system. Based on empirical investigations on Latin American countries, Frank et al, came to argue that dependency ultimately results from such mechanisms of surplus transfer as 'super-exploitation' of labour, unequal exchange, expansion of multi-national corporations in Third World markets, international lending institutions and metropolitan expansion financed by Third World savings Frank, 1969). The more strong the linkage between the

developed and underdeveloped formations the more desperate the latter are economically. To confirm this postulate Frank investigated Latin American economic development record of the 1930's depression and the 1940's to show that while the link between the satellite and metropole was in those times relatively weak, the latter in fact experienced more economic expansion.

Despite this theoretical advance over modernisation theory, the underdevelopment school bears weaknesses of its own. The first weakness discerned in dependency discourse is that it is said to be ahistorical. Colin Leys accuses dependency theory of being biased toward

> "... what happens to the underdeveloped countries at hand of imperialism and colonialism, rather than on the total historical process involved, including the various forms of struggle against imperialism and colonialism which grow out of the conditions of underdevelopment" (Leys, 1975:20)

The dependency school also denies Third World countries the possibility of generating their own 'internal' development. Nor does it indeed explain changes internal to capitalist countries, especially the question of economic efficiency, automation and better know-how. Even from within its discourse, dependency theory fails to provide for 'dis-locations' and the differential transfer of resources from Third World countries to advanced capitalist countries. In the majority of underdeveloped countries labour migration

and especially the 'brain drain' resulted in a massive inflow of remittances to underdeveloped countries during the 1960's and 1970's. Hardly ever, if at all, do dependency theorists talk of such redistributive mechanisms.

The functionalist variants of dependency theory (eg Wallerstein, 1974) put the focus on a total world system and view this as having requirements which are met by specific classes, or events existing. According to world system analysis we should no longer talk of peripheral world formations, but only of 'stages of world system' (Fitzgerald, 1983:19). Yet world system analysis merely elevates arguments within the dependency school to a higher level of analysis, it certainly does not deal with the difficulties inherent in dependency theory. Instead of looking at a single chain of core-periphery or satellite-metropole we now perceive the theory in terms of a multiplicity of linkages, both between developed and developing as well as between developed countries themselves. The transfer of surplus should, the argument goes, be approached in terms of what roles the different classes play in influencing the process of surplus redistribution at the world scale. It is here that Wallerstein's functionalism can be discerned: classes exist merely to serve the interests and requirements of capitalism.

The dependency school also fails to explain poverty within developed countries themselves - the general phenomenon characterised by Oscar Lewis as the 'culture of poverty' is

a case in point. Furthermore, we cannot accommodate dependency theory to fit, with impunity, the pro-socialist Third World and advanced communist fronts. The question which remains is whether we locate such countries within the so-called world capitalist system or isolate them as peculiar instances. Differences of ideology as well as between class and elite are largely neglected by the dependency school. On the other hand, the notion of structure and function still loom large despite the claim to the contrary. This functional bias is mainly the result of the theory's over-emphasis of the notion of distribution to the neglect of production.

Dissatisfaction with dependency and world system theories prompted 'articulation' students to argue that it is in fact production, rather than distribution, that can indeed account for surplus transfer and exploitation. Articulation-of-modes theory holds that in fact Third World formation - in contrast to the view which sees it as being split into pre-capitalist peripheral and advanced capitalist centres - should be seen as one formation subsuming two or more modes of production articulated through the relations of production. The relations of production came to dominate articulation-of-modes discourse, market exchange alone being considered insufficient for defining a mode of production (Taylor, 1979:110). The significance of the articulation-of-modes theory is that it provides for the existence of more than one mode of production at the same time and space. Surplus labour, as a consequence, can be

appropriated by a capitalist mode under different laws of capitalist accumulation (see eg Meillassoux, 1975). Such transfer of surplus does not involve the separation of the direct producer from his means of production. On the contrary a non-capitalist mode is deliberately left to function so as to allow for the reproduction of labour outside capitalism. Investigation of production in terms of articulation helps pinpoint the various forms of participation in a capitalist market. The nature and degree of such participation depends on the way production is organised under the mode of production under investigation. Kinship and commodity modes of production, for instance, organise production in different ways. When different modes articulate, the ultimate outcome is the domination of the non-capitalist by the capitalist mode of production. Some sort of structure is then created in which the dominance of the capitalist mode is continuously re-produced. The whole process is referred to as the preservation/destruction of the subordinated, non-capitalist mode of production (Meillaissoux, 1975). Thus, the capitalist mode is referred to as the 'determinant' in the last instance and the non-capitalist mode the determinate. This process of determinacy and reproduction is described by Taylor as follows -

> "Within a given social formation..., the dominant mode of production determines which of the instances occupies the determinant place; it is the structuring of the other instances of the social formation by the

determinant instance that enables the mode of production to be reproduced" (1979:139).

Meillassoux (1975) in Maidens, Meal, and Money deploys the concept of articulation to analyse the processes by which a capitalist mode of production interferes with a domestic mode and subordinates it to its requirements. The author sets himself to analyse the relationship between central capitalist economies and a domestic mode which sends migrant labour to the former. He argues that exploitative relations of production stem from two main sources. First, where migrant labour takes the form of circular migration, appropriation is expressed as labour-rent. Labour rent is defined by the amount of wage which would have to sufficiently reproduce the labourer within the capitalist system. The employer enjoys the labour rent as far as the labourer's reproduction of his labour-power takes place outside the confines of capitalism. Then there is the second source of exploitation. Where labour migration becomes a permanent phenomenon, labour-rent gives way to surplus-labour. Reproduction in this case falls with the capitalist employer. In general the domestic mode of production functions to subsidise capitalism; the latter mode need not interrupt such a mechanism.

For Meillassoux exploitation mainly takes two forms. The first derives from the way production is organised within the domestic mode of production. This mode usually organises production on a collective basis (eg family labour).

The labourer who migrates to work in the urbanc centres relies partly on the family property for his reproduction. Therefore, Meillassoux argues, exploitation should apply to the whole family since the surplus product expropriated by the capitalist sanctions the whole family. Exploitation ceases to be individualistic. The second form of exploitation is that of surplus labour - as this is generally known in Marxist jargon. One of the results of the reproduction of labour taking place outside the realm of capitalism is that the level of wages can remain very even, even in the face of shortage of labour.

Meillassoux therefore puts considerable emphasis on various constraints on Third World communities against developing their own internal capitalism (see also, Signorelli, 1981). These constraints are in turn upheld by consumerist ideology. Two facts immediately obtain. First, that transition from pre-capitalism to capitalism proper is, for present-day Third World formation, a long-term phenomenon, or at least remains a delayed process. Secondly, and consequently, the conditions of life in the periphery continue to deteriorate, or otherwise remain stagnant.

The concept of articulation-of-modes has recently been extended for analysing small-scale enterprise in the Third World. Kahn's recent study of the blacksmithing industry in Western Sumatra is illustrative of this kind of analysis (Kahn, 1975). Kahn treated blacksmithing as petty-commodity production working under a very low level of

technology. The organisation of the labour process, however, is undertaken in a capitalist fashion. The smith's inputs of production consist of his own labour, hired labour and raw material bought from the market. Through this simple labour process the petty-producer is said to extract surplus value. Kahn traced the source of hired labour to the lineage mode of production, and the raw material and final output to capitalism. In this way three modes of production are isolated as articulating, viz, the lineage, petty-commodity and capitalist modes of production. Here the most influential factor in the smithing industry is the cyclical movement of production forces whereby capitalism acts to determine the nature of production in the smithing enterprise. It is argued that the rise in world prices would make expansion of the smithing industry possible. But this, in turn, interferes with the lineage mode of production since workers are drawn from rice fields into the smithing industry. This interferes with the subsistence food supply on which the blacksmith depends for the reproduction of his workers. The whole mechanism ultimately undermines the blacksmithing industry. Kahn's answer as to why the blacksmith fails to expand his industry is twofold. Firstly, there is the industry's inaccessibility to modern technology, which lies with capitalism. The other constraint derives from the smith's inability to increase the size of the productive units in the form of additional labour input.

The importance of analysing small-scale enterprise in the light of articulation-of-modes is that it helps explain the persistence of non-capitalist or non-traditional forms of production in the urban sector of Third World formations. The logic of exploitation in this analysis lies in the undervaluation of goods and services supplied by a mode subordinated to a dominant capitalist one.

However, the articulation school came under heavy attack concerning the mechanism of over-exploitation (Booth, 1985). Kahn himself (1980) criticises Meillassoux for the inadequacy of deploying the notion of reproduction. It is absurd, he argues, to believe that domestic modes of production exist merely for the purpose of 'subsidising' capitalism. Another attack on the articulation school comes from Booth (1985). Booth argues that while in actuality more than one mode is at stake in the exchange process, the real value of labour-power is imputed from capitalism. He puts the argument succinctly as follows -

> "[E]xchanges within social formations with combinations of modes or forms of production are judged against an ideal type of purely capitalist exchange representing (it may be argued) the <u>future</u> historical pattern in the social formation in question. This offends one's sense of history and does not seem to have any warrant within Marxist theory" (Booth, 1985:771).

Kahn's analysis is likewise subjected to the same criticism. For Booth, such analysis rests on a theoretical misunderstanding mainly because, too often it is wrongly believed that -

> "The goods or services of the small-scale sector sell for less than their value because... the 'wages' imputed to the members of the enterprise or household are below what they would earn producing the same output under capitalism" (1985:771).

The nub of Booth's argument is that goods or, generally, transactions occurring in a non-capitalist mode should not be evaluated in terms of the value these transactions would generate within capitalism since the two spheres structurally and historically differ from one another. These difficulties within the articulation school condemn it and would relegate it to functionalist explanations. As has been indicated, it is illogical to argue that a mode of production, in essence, exists not in respect of itself but for serving the requirements of other modes.

There is also the question of whether the concept of exploitation is itself the correct way of describing social relationships. Dalton (1974) holds the opinion that the concept of exploitation, as applied to peasants in particular, bears some sort of ideological overtone. I agree with this sort of opinion. Discussion of this matter allows me to make a theoretical case for approaching the question of development in actor-oriented terms and

generally put aside approaches which rest on outsiders' evaluations. Dalton rejects exploitation as being theoretically inadequate for analysing peasant relations with non-peasants. For, if peasants are actually exploited why do they participate in schemes of change or engage in relationships that work to their detriment? Against exploitation analysis I argue that peasants must be seen as behaving rationally, evaluating options in relation to the situation and acting accordingly. Moreover, it is theoretically dangerous to impute judgement on peasants without adducing empirical evidence for the existence of exploitation.

Students of peasant economy (most of whom are Marxist or neo-Marxist) take the phenomena characteristic of peasant societies at their face value, and, not unintentionally, unproblematically link the description to the concept of exploitation. For instance, peasants are characterised by the linkages they have with towns and urban centres (see Shanin, 1971). It is then held that such linkages necessarily entail that peasants should sustain the state and towns through some sort of unequal exchange relationship. My opinion is that this is not always the case. On the contrary, peasants very often engage in labour migration to cities in a conscious pursuit of objectives that directly engender the betterment of the quality of their own life and that of their home communities (see eg chapter 5). There are, of course, some obvious reasons for considering peasants as an exploited group, as Dalton illustrates -

> "... peasants are thought to be ill-used by non-peasants because of one or more features of the total peasant situation - economic, political, social and cultural: because peasants are politically powerless, materially impoverished, or in debt; because they are illiterate, or, if literate, uneducated; or because they are the lowest human segment in a socially stratified society ... to say that peasants are 'politically powerless' or politically subjugated without then explaining for specific peasantries of actual time and place what are the political and legal institutions under which they live that make them powerless or subjugated, is very ambiguous" (Dalton, 1974:555-556).

This analysis reveals the complexity of using the concept 'peasant exploitation' without reservations or without being specific about what it really means and the particular instance to which it applies. According to Dalton we cannot be certain of exploitation without adducing sufficient evidence, from an actor's perspective, of some sort of exploitation. Those who assert that peasants are exploited do not usually take into account "the subjective feelings of peasants, that is, whether or not various sorts of peasants feel themselves to be exploited" (1974:558). The bias of characterising peasant relations with non-peasants in this superficial way is that it omits any mention of what peasants actually gain in being engaged in the various fields of activity. And indeed some writers can adduce concrete facts which falsify exploitation

argumentation. As Dalton has shown, Finney documents a case where peasants of New Guinea can receive substantial advantage from the obligatory payments to entrepreneurial big-men. The argument quoted at length is as follows -

> "And once they [big-men entrepreneurs] became interested in investing their coffee revenue in other projects, they have usually been able to solicit considerable additional amounts of cash from their agents for investment purposes, just like the big-men of earlier days were able to solicit pigs, shells, and other valuables for an important exchange. The relationship between the modern big-men and their clansmen, and other followers, should not, however, be seen as exploitation of the unsophisticated. Rather, it should be judged in terms of the standards of Gorokan society... The Gorokan entrepreneurs fully realise that they are beholden to their supporters for their commercial success, and they take pains to grant reciprocal favours to those who have helped them as well as to emphasise that their enterprises are also enterprises of the group. Their supporters, in turn, are generally proud to have helped 'their big-man' to achieve his status, and enjoy the prestige of being associated with a successful entrepreneur" (in Dalton 1974:558).

With this sort of analysis in mind, I make the case that a sound theoretical framework capable of providing appropri-

ate information for policy-making is one which is basically actor-centred. According to Long (1977) analysis from an actor-centred perspective should give close attention to the way individuals, group or particular categories of individuals evaluate or perceive alternative courses of action in a particular social context and assess the possible outcomes (1977:134). The strength of this sort of theoretical framework lies in its freedom from value judgement, outsider's bias or ideological overtones that may give a lop-sided image of realities. Commitment to an actor-centred approach necessitates that answers to given questions should be sought with reference to the actor's culture, the means available to him and the goals as perceived by the actor himself. Economic anthropologists who subscribe to the actor-centred model include Moerman (1968), Salisbury (1970), and Ortiz (1973). Adopting an actor-centred view for analysing Thai peasants' choices with respect to farming techniques, Moerman maintains that farmers decisions could be grasped adequately only with reference to the farmer's perceived alternatives, information available and rules guiding farming behaviour.

As quoted by Long, the strategies which Thai peasants adopt can only make sense because -

> "the village farmer categorizes and compares, demands a close fit between what he observes and what he talks about, make judicious use of previously successful means, anticipates the alterations that his actions will produce, plans possible alternative courses of

action, is concerned with timing, finds ways to increase the predictable features of his situation, decides his correctness in terms of rules of procedure, is aware of and actually exercises choice, and works to increase the scientific corpus of information he uses for making and explaining his farming decisions and their rewards" (in Long, 1977:134).

The relevance of the actor-centred model for assessing development schemes and projects is that it is theoretically grounded to account for people's responses by assuming the actor's position, which is tantamount to appreciating the ways people, on their own, evaluate their participation in schemes aimed at improving the quality of their life.

CHAPTER 2

The Practice of Rural Development

Rural development has become a growing theme in national governments of the Third World as well as in international assistance since the United Nations Second Development Decade of the 1970's. The impetus comes from the recognition that past experience with industrialisation, imported technology and urban-focused plans are ill-suited to the realities of Third World countries. The latter policies, it is believed, could only lead to the creation of a dual structure in the national economy in which the modern sector progresses at the expense of the traditional agricultural sector. Development is therefore conceived to be a concern for precisely this agricultural sector, which comprises the majority of the population, living on the verge of poverty and in deteriorating conditions of living. That the rural sector's natural and human resources could be harnessed to provide the basis for national development stems from the recognition that agricultural surplus could be progressively drawn to feed the urban sector's population. It could, also, supply raw material to enhance the manufacturing capacity of the modern industrial establishments (Lea and Chaudhri, 1983; Mehta, 1984).

Against this background, international agencies in collaboration with national governments in less developed countries undertook the task of launching rural develop-

ment projects for the transformation of the rural sector. The objective is to expand production to meet both domestic consumption requirements and export revenues. Despite efforts made on the part of the above-mentioned development promoters there is no universally accepted definition of rural development. This chapter is concerned to touch on the various approaches and programmes aimed at improving the well-being of rural communities and on the specific problems planners are attending to in the rural sector. In particular, the various schemes in sub-Saharan Africa and Sudan, will be mentioned in this chapter. It will be evident that the Habila scheme which we shall investigate in detail in chapter 4 is an example of the so-called transformation approach with respect to the aims it intends to achieve.

I have mentioned in chapter 1 that policy-makers invoke particular theories of development in order to justify their positions. Now, in this chapter, I turn more explicitly to these policy-makers and to their practical approaches to rural development and social change. The emphasis is more or less on planner's perceptions and the broad models or programmes underpinning the various approaches they advocate. We should establish that these planners are attending to specific problems within the rural sector; therefore, they are subscribing to some sort of modernisation theory (cf chapter 1). The section below, on the critique of these rural development schemes and pro-

grammes, thus links to the theoretical discussions about underdevelopment considered in chapter 1.

Among the attempts at defining rural development, the following has been made -

> "Rural development is a strategy to enable specific groups of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among these who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless" (Chambers, 1983:147).

The position Chambers evidently takes is that rural development is to be looked at as a 'strategy'. A strategy, according to Mabogunje (1980) encompasses both methodological and ideological dimensions; the ideological dimension relating to concepts and ideas concerning the forms of relationships and organisation preferred in a particular society; and the methodological relating to how such forms of organisation could be achieved (1980:118). Copp defines rural development as a total process "aimed at improving the well-being and self-realisation of people living outside the urbanised areas through collective "effort" (in Mehta 1984:14). It occurs to me that development as a process is but one aspect of the development strategy since the latter includes the means (or process as Mabogunje states) as well as the ideas of achieving devel-

opment goals. A more comprehensive definition is given by Lele (1975) in which rural development is seen as "improving living standards of the mass of the low-income population residing in rural areas and making the process of their development self-sustained" (1975:20).

Whatever the perspective through which it is viewed, rural development has the following components, as advanced by Mehta. First it is concerned to "release the potential of man by creating skills and appropriate knowledge so that he can exploit his environment to his advantage". Secondly, "focus has to be on the ecological setting since rural is in contrast to urban and its development should have a proportionate or balance of approach to urban development". Thirdly, "the means of production and appropriate technology (to gain access to efficient source of economic growth) should constitute the third component of rural development". Fourthly, "institution-building [ie institutional innovations to enhance productivity and the quality of life in rural areas] at the village level and the organisation and management of men, money and material resources should be the fourth component of rural development". "The fifth component of rural development is 'self-reliance' which needs to be brought in through local initiative, participation and mobilisation of existing resources". The sixth component should be "focus on distributive justice insofar as the poor segments of the rural population are concerned" (Mehta 1983:17-18).

Generally, the wide range of development projects, particularly those launched in sub-Saharan Africa during the early 1970's, share the following characteristics:

First, rural development projects are formulated and run by government agencies, often with grassroots participation and financed from foreign assistance.

Secondly, they are aimed at the eradication of rural poverty and unemployment.

Thirdly, they have a moral element, viz, looking forward to achieving social justice and freedom.

Fourth, according to the ideological orientation or the political colour of the agencies sponsoring development projects and formulating development strategies, they are broadly classified as reformist, technocratic, and radical. Whatever the distinction, many projects seem to be rather similar as to the recipes they recommend, even if their goals and ideologies are different. A reformist strategy, for instance, aims at income redistribution in the context of an emphasis on the market mechanism (Lea and Chaudhri, 1983:19). As regards income redistribution it is socially determined and backed by state help. Examples of the reformist strategy are land reform programmes and cooperatives. States like Taiwan and Japan are illustrative of countries advocating reformist strategies. Technocratic strategy is policy-determined, implies private endeavour

and also cooperatives (1983:19). An illustrative example is South Korea. Radical strategies are more or less socialist or pro-socialist, the impetus usually coming from the state giving special emphasis to cooperatives or collectivisation programmes. China and Tanzania are illustrative examples. Theoretically, the various projects, programmes or strategies of rural development may be classified under the labels, transformation approach or improvement approach (Hunter, 1962; Long, 1977).

We should be crystal clear about the distinctions between project, programme and approach. A rural development 'project' is usually a micro-level attempt at improving a specific rural area and at bringing a specific type of change. A 'programme' on the other hand, is effectively the aggregate of all those rural projects that are intended to affect a wider sector of the national economy (Lea and Chaudhri, 1983:16). Meanwhile, 'approach' is a theoretical notion relating to the strategy of planning, whilst, a 'programme' refers to the practice of rural development.

The Improvement Versus The Transformation Approaches

The Improvement Approach

In the early 1960's the World Bank mission in Tanganyika offered two distinct but often not mutually exclusive approaches to rural development: the improvement and transformation approaches (Hunter, 1962; Long, 1977). The

improvement approach takes the existing social and economic structures as such, and attempts to pin changes on the diffusion of green revolution techniques (eg seeds, fertilizers etc) to small farmers. In contrast, the transformation approach implies a total transformation of the existing socio-economic structure of the rural community into new forms of organisation and production. The improvement approach typically entails community development programmes of which the major feature is the mobilisation of human and non-human resources, and better organisation of the traditional forms of leadership and cooperation. The rationale behind the improvement approach is that it is cost-efficient, manageable and involves very little supervision and government intervention. Intervention by government agencies is in the form of extension workers supplying small farmers with information concerning the efficient use of fertilizers, best crop mix and broadening the knowledge of poor farmers on the merits of green revolution. Responsibility for providing incentives to small farmers to produce for the market lies with government institutions established to provide credit with minimum interest rates. Another source of incentive derives from increased product prices.

The improvement approach is often taken to imply a wider coverage in respect of the different aspects of rural society; for this reason it is likely that the improvement and transformation approaches overlap. Such efforts include the provision of health services, educational

programmes and village industrialisation and electrification. This undertaking entails that extension agents be trained to advise and/or guide those who adopt new innovations. For reasons of efficiency, small farmers could be organised into cooperative units since this would mean better management of human and material resources. For example, single-purpose cooperatives were sponsored by colonial governments (as part of community development) to facilitate produce marketing through marketing boards established for that purpose (Allan, 1965; Long, 1977). In contrast with the transformation approach, the improvement approach implies persuasion and requires the effective participation of all groups concerned. But evidence shows that 'improvement' has been used, ideologically, as a device for the creation of a class of progressive farmers to cushion any likely uprising on the part of the majority of population living at near-subsistence levels. This has been observed by Allan for Tsarist Russia which was "inspired by the model of the English yeoman farmer and their policies gave rise to a class of relatively prosperous middle-class farmers, the Kulaks, "who were later to be stigmatised as enemies of the revolution and the people" (Allan, 1965:403).

To stimulate greater participation of the villagers in the context of improvement, governments run demonstration farms, often called state-farms, the purpose of which is to show "the level of increased yields possible under new methods" (Long, 1977:147). For the same purpose, and due

to the reluctance of poor farmers to undertake risky ventures, an improvement project got started by a minority of progressive farmers who are quick to adopt new techniques. Such farmers are, usually, strategically placed, economically or politically, to adopt new innovations. A non-forecasted result of this type of approach is that it often creates a progressive elite dominating the local poor farmers and controlling government services and facilities (see eg Apthorpe, 1970).

One of the disadvantages of the improvement approach is that growth and income distribution will be difficult to achieve at least in the short-run. This holds true in spite of the fact that 'improvement' has often resulted in substantial increase in agricultural production. Thus Long maintains that -

> "From an economic point of view, the improvement approach appears to have achieved a great deal. There have been rapid increases in peasant production in developing countries during the last twenty or thirty years and this is mainly due to improved smallholder agriculture" (1977:148).

The second disadvantage of the improvement approach is that it implies a considerable period of time to achieve an overall growth in the traditional agricultural sector. This is due to the slow adoption of green revolution techniques coupled with time-consuming extension education. The inescapable outcome is, too often, a differential

access to productive resources with concomitant socio-economic differentiation in the social strcuture. Other sociological problems involved in the improvement approach are, by and large, indigenous and are closely related to people's attitudes about social change in general. Poor economic attitudes of peasants, lack of commitment on the part of extension workers to the needs of the rural people are common underlying sociological problems of planned social change. It is argued, very often, that peasants resist innovation basically for non-material reasons (see eg Foster, 1965). However, the fact that thousands of farmers remain unaffected by extension programmes probably can lead to negative outcomes. Extension agents are constrained by logistical problems in reaching the remotest parts of the rural sector; poor communication and transportation facilities lead to the reinforcement of this problem. Furthermore differences in qualification and skill between poor farmers and extension agents renders receptivity a bit difficult. Finally the larger the size of villages to be covered by an individual extension agent the less efficient the programme is likely to be. Hunter maintains that it is very difficult to make community effort a self-sustained process at least in the long-run when increased differentiation accompanies the commercialisation of traditional agriculture (Hunter, 1962). Such differentiation impinges on the traditional values that are the hallmark of village cooperation and cohesiveness.

One can safely argue that existing systems of land tenure will in the long-run be a limiting factor in agricultural improvement. Traditional practices of land inheritance ultimately lead to land fragmentation that renders future land utilisation a wasteful task. The problem becomes more acute when land holdings are coupled with a belief that land belongs to the ancestors and that spirits require that land should not be alienated. Thus, to achieve the objectives of modernising traditional agriculture with minimal sociological problems, a transformation approach has been suggested.

The Transformation approach

This model of rural development aims at a radical change in the social and economic structures of the rural society. It entails the supplanting of the traditional pattern of labour organisation, land holding and resource utilisation by one based on the economies of scale and size. Examples of the transformation approach are the large plantation enterprises like the Gezira scheme and the resettlement project of the Halfa populations in Sudan (see e.g. Gaitskell, 1959; Barnett, 1977). The Gezira scheme was in principle an initiative from the colonial administration to organise peasant forms of production into modern efficient units to serve the needs of foreign capital by producing a highly demanded cash crop - cotton. To ensure effective participation a model of cooperativeness was worked out between the tenant, management and the administration. The proceeds of cotton had then to be divided between the three

partners: 40% went to the tenant, 40% to the Government and 20% to the cotton companies. Extra advantages to the tenant included extension education, the development of health services and credit to hire cotton-picking labour. However, despite the fact that initiative for the scheme came from the Government it was discovered later that the new system of management for running the scheme could not function well unless traditional forms of family authority were incorporated in the new venture. The aim then was to create a new form of cooperative structure combining the advantages of traditional and modern leadership (The Sudan Government, 1972). This broadened the planning base, as locals were encouraged to participate in the planning process through the so-called locally elected village councils. The scheme as it stands today could best be described as a major achievement in national development. Writing on The Agricultural Development of the Middle East, Keen passes the judgement that "the Gezira is, in fact, an illustration of how agricultural progress and rural development can best be made" (1972:30). The same holds, sixteen years later.

Land reform projects are another implication of a transformation approach. The characteristic feature of this is the negation of the existing socio-economic system. The institutional forms of the traditional social structure are deemed to be the major constraints against efficient resource utilisation, labour mobilisation and capital formation. Because the transformation approach involves

massive financial investment, programmes are usually run under a rigid bureaucratic structure. Such management is likewise present in land reform projects introduced to change the traditional tenure system. Such policy derives impetus from the recognition by ambitious governments that the existing agricultural sector is marked with land-holding disparities that threaten equitable distribution of income. A prerequisite to any policy aimed at improving the well-being of small farmers should be the reallocation of landholdings to spread the benefits of innovation into a wide base. Examples of a land reform programme that have been repeatedly (and ironically) cited by planners are the collectivized farming system advocated by the Soviet government and the cooperativisation of agriculture in China (de Kadt and Williams, 1974). Land reform policies are said to correlate with socialist or communist orientations. As a matter of fact, land reform programmes are usually undertaken by a planned economy with the primary purpose of bridging the inequities between large and small subsistence farmers. But the experience of collectivised agriculture in China shows that such programmes are not confined to the reorganisation of agriculture. Rather it is aimed at fostering agricultural production both for local self-sufficiency and national development.

The economic implication of land reform policy is that it leads to maximum mobilisation of labour for effective resource utilisation. Furthermore, the large-scale farm is said to have the advantage of achieving greater returns and

of curbing rural unemployment. External financial assistance is often called for to finance land reform plans, coupled with mechanisation and the importation of green revolution techniques such as fertilizers, sprayers, etc. Such production inputs would no doubt increase production costs. This high cost of input would be offset by the large quantity of surplus product resulting from the use of high yielding crop varieties. The counter-argument directed against land reform programmes states that large units are not necessarily more productive. It has been proved that small-scale units yield more output per acre than large-scale farms. The other part of the criticism establishes the fact that tasks such as planning, marketing and input provision entail a burden on the state apparatus. Developing countries, due to the distinct character of their economies need not copy the model of advanced capitalist and socialist countries (Johnston, 1979).

The sociological problems inherent in land reform as a transformational device include conflict between poor peasants and agricultural workers on the one hand, and between cooperatives and governments on the other. Such problems are in practice likely to be due to government establishing adverse pricing policies which are unacceptable to the direct producer. For this reason it is often argued that the transformation approach can ensure only a moderate improvement in the overall economy.

Some Categories of Programmes

More recently the World Bank drew up a variety of categories of rural development programmes that could directly eradicate rural poverty and unemployment. We turn to investigate these different development programmes.

1. The Integrated Rural Development Programme

The integrated rural development programme as viewed by World Bank officials is a coordinated approach whose purpose is to offer better employment opportunities and more equitable income distribution in the rural sector of Third World countries. This objective is to be achieved through the utilisation of local human and natural resources with the assistance of imported technology and scientific research. It is so comprehensive and broad that it covers almost every aspect of the rural sector: literacy, non-formal training, business, plantations, small farmers, forestry, public works, rural craft, social infrastructure, construction of feeder roads and provision of inputs (ILO, 1979).

Experimental projects, pilot and intensive research work at the grassroot level are usually undertaken for the purpose of identifying potential advantages and contraints. Information is collected as regards land settlement, employment and infrastructure. The second step is the formulation of a coordinated programme that emphasises the participation of local people. Participation is stressed in the integrated rural development programme as a necess-

ary condition if the benefits are to reach the rural poor (cf Salmen, 1987).

The comprehensive strategy for the Sudan suggested by the International Labour Office (ILO) mission in Sudan in 1976 is an illustrative example of an integrated rural development programme. The report devoted considerable attention to growth, employment and equity for the rural sector of the Sudan. Putting into consideration the diverse structure of Sudan economy, the report urged "decentralisation" to allow effective coverage of the whole agricultural sector of the national economy. For that matter, and to guarantee that subsistence farmers are reached by the programme the report recommended an "institutional framework consisting of rural development centres in each of the approximately 200 districts in the country, possibly under the aegis of a special ministry separate from the one involved with modern irrigated and mechanised farming" (ILO, 1979:14).

Issues covered in the report include rural labour markets, education and training, health and nutrition, animal husbandry, irrigated agriculture, mechanised rain-fed farming, construction, industrialisation, and traditional subsistence agriculture. The recommendations in the ILO report, however, proved too expensive so the Sudan government followed only some of them in the Basic Programme for Agricultural Development 1977-1985.

The major problem involved in an integrated programme is that it is very difficult to finance by a developing country, like the Sudan, burdened by balance of payments bottlenecks. Intensification of agricultural inputs requires sizeable government expenditure, a problem accentuated by the vastness of the whole country. Additional cost will be incurred through farmer education, improved efficiency of crop marketing and credit for subsistence farmers.

However, there are other reasons why the Sudan government fails to accept the ILO's policy objectives in its entirety. Policies involving income and land redistribution, Marxists would argue, are more likely to be met with political opposition. This is substantiated by the fact that state machinery is part and parcel of the interest groups normally dominating modernized farming. Eric Clayton, for instance, notes the following -

> "According to Emile Rado, 'the failure of the ILO's policy objectives to gain political acceptance in developing countries themselves' was a fundamental weakness: it is evident 'the reason why' is that the pursuit of objectives of fuller employment and greater equity often conflicts with other goals that matter more to those in power in developing countries" (Clayton, 1964:312).

In reaction to this the ILO turned its attention to policies that directly meet its objectives of reaching the

majority of the rural poor. In the mid-1970's it suggested 'Basic Needs' as an essential target of rural development. This was thought to be more humanitarian as it gives particular emphasis to the least disadvantaged group.

2. The Basic Needs Programme

The important aspects of this programme are the following. The first component relates to the encouragement of co-operative units. National governments are advised to promote cooperatives and to provide them with the necessary credit, marketing facilities and infrastructural improvement. The underlying assumption is that small farmers be mobilised and made to participate so as to initiate their own cooperatives. Secondly, agrarian reform is a thrust of the Basic Needs programme, as a measure of justice and equality (ILO, 1979). It is considered that farmers' associations and workers' organisations are the best institutional channels to pursue and guard their interests. Thirdly, agro-based industries and public works can provide ancillary employment opportunities for the mass of the populations. Finally, the programme is to be extended to cover issues such as credit, marketing, training, feeder roads, construction and health facilities.

Modernising traditional subsistence agriculture is thought to be achieved at two levels (a) the individual conditions of life and (b) the overall national economy (Mehta, 1984). A direct attack on poverty requires the elevation of the existing social structure to levels commensurate with

modern technology. The training and provision of extension education for small farmers under such a programme help the latter adopt innovation and change their attitudes towards commercial production. The Basic Needs programme is promulgated to attain two complementary objectives. In the short-run it is hoped to assure a decent way of life by fulfilling the minimum human needs of shelter, clothes and food. The attainment of this goal, it is suggested, would contribute to the long-term objective of self-reliance. To translate these qualitative targets into monetary terms, it is suggested that the target population be looked at -

> "not merely in terms of economic poverty and deprivation in the sense of low incomes and lack of access to economic resources, but also in relation to conditions of exploitation and oppression through social structures that deny people not only economic facilities but also human dignity and freedom of initiative" (ILO, 1979:10).

The underlying assumption of the Basic Needs model, however, renders commitment to its policy objectives questionable, viz, that Third World governments are willing to divorce their centralised control for the sake of solving social and economic problems. It will be a mistake to believe that power-holders are likely to opt for policies and programmes that would utterly upset the status quo. It is for this reason that rural development programmes, in general, have led to rising frustration among the local populations of developing countries.

A recent shift in national and international policy has seen a great emphasis put on sub-Saharan Africa's development. This reflected a third category of programmes: the Accelerated Development Programme.

3. The Accelerated Development Programme in Sub-Saharan Africa

This type of programme is very different from the other categories of programmes, in that it is meant to rehabilitate previous programmes to achieve a desirable rate of economic growth for the whole economy. The programme was initiated by the Berg Report of the World Bank in the early 1980's in its agenda for developing those sub-Saharan African countries which failed to achieve a desirable rate of economic growth in their programmes of the 1960's and 1970's. The objective of the report was to foster the growth of the private sector (hence different from Basic Needs). Encouragement of the private sector enterprises was justified on the grounds that the private sector has already portrayed features commensurate with the goals of the new strategy (World Bank, 1981). This model to a large extent represents another version of the 'growth poles' strategy in which the bulk of investment is concentrated on areas of significant growth potential to serve as a nucleus for development. The rest of the population is assumed to benefit from 'trickle down' of accelerated growth.

As a result of this programme, arid and semi-arid regions where little by way of private sector exists continued to

receive meagre attention (Allen, 1987:438). This increased attention to the private enterprise signaled a radical shift from previous rural development policies where the public sector had traditionally received the lion's share of government spending. The World Bank shift of policy is said to be due to the recognition that previous concentration on the public sector led to substantial decline in foreign exchange revenue due to the bottlenecks in Africa's export production (World Bank, 1981). Stagnation in agricultural production could also be attributed to the onslaught of famine and drought that had impacted the subsistence sector during the 1970's and mid-1980's. The second part of the accusation directed against previous state-sponsored development programmes is that state intervention ultimately resulted in increasing disincentives to farmers in relation to its adverse pricing policies. As an alternative the report has shown great concern for fostering the managerial capabilities of private enterprises to spearhead the process of agricultural development. However, the public sector is not entirely excluded. In Clausen's words, "the public sector will have to meet the extensive needs for infrastructure, education, health and other services" (World Bank, 1981:V).

The objectives of the Accelerated Development strategy for sub-Saharan African countries are well stated in the World Bank Report of 1981: "it will help generate the resources Africa needs to consolidate its political and administrative forces, educate and improve the health of its people,

and find out what will work and what will not" (1981:7). To help achieve the above-mentioned objective, international assistance has shown a positive commitment to release larger aid flows to African governments. It is suggested that aid be raised from $4.9 to $9.1 billion to achieve a level of growth of 2.5% in regional per capita income by the end of the decade. As a reaction to the Bank's report, African countries invested a great deal of their foreign aid into the rehabilitation of previous projects, with high priority to productive projects. The World Bank report, however, identified the following obstacles to Africa's development. First, over the past twenty years the critical constraint has been the scarcity of skilled manpower. It emphasized that in sub-Saharan Africa over three quarters of the cadre were foreign (1981:9), a problem mainly attributable to unavailability of advanced educational facilities.

Secondly, political instability in most African states thwarted efforts to achieve sustained economic growth. The ill-effects of international violence has been (a) "high priority to short-term political objectives" (b) "large-scale displacement of people" and (c) "diversion of resources to military spending" (World Bank, 1981:11). Thirdly, the colonial heritage is considered as a 'relic' ill-suited for African future development. The structure of the economy inherited by the post-independence African countries is described as dual, with conflicting peripheral and modern industrial sectors. Fourthly, being located in

the tropics is in itself an obstacle to development. The tropical zone is faced with inadequate rainfall, recurring drought, population diversion and desertification. Finally, population pressure meant that more people are to be fed from subsistence agriculture. This, in turn triggers off rapid migration from rural to urban towns. It has been estimated that population growth rate in Africa during the 1970's was approximately 2.7% per annum (1981:14).

The report, then, draws the conclusion that to arrest the inherited structural problems African governments are advised to utilise their substantial potential natural and human resources and harness them for future economic growth. However, the outlook still seems bleak insofar as drought, rural-urban migration and famine continue to persist.

The Critique of Rural Development Programmes

Lele (1975) in her assessment of rural development programmes in Africa, has summarised the limited effectiveness of these programmes in six main points. In the first place their weakness lies in the inflexibility of development policies due to an emphasis on specific target or types of crops. Second, the dearth of a research base and the limited knowledge on which programmes are based adversely affected programme policy and consequently its objectives. Thirdly, there is the problem of launching technologically inappropriate projects, largely due to limited knowledge

and expertise. Fourth, the programmes are run under the sponsorship of often foreign administrative institutions inappropriate to the local conditions of African states. Fifth, these programmes are undertaken in the context of poorly understood socio-cultural and institutional environment. Finally, national policies themselves do not react to the likely impact of the projects in the implementation phase so as to make corrective action (Lele, 1975:176).

Lele, however, came under heavy attack from anthropologists for biasing her analysis towards the exogenous factors influencing rural development. Most of her attention is devoted to considering such components as agricultural extension, credit provision, marketing, the diversification of the productive activities, training and project administration. As a result she attributes project ineffectiveness to bias in strategy toward export crops and the neglect of food production. But it is well recognised that projects are influenced both by external and internal factors. The internal factors are referred to as the rural milieu by David (David, 1976:95). The external factors include -

> "the skilled human capital that can be made available to direct a development programme, the information that describes the resources endowment of the area and technology that is available to transform the resource endowment into desired consumer goods" (1976:95-96).

According to David, the rural milieu refers to the indigenous social organisation in the community and goals shared among the groups in the local community. The second part of the attack directed by David is that the conflict between the values of the traditional economy and those embodied in the market economy is not given due attention. Plainly David's critique of Lele's analysis of the programmes also applies directly to the programmes themselves.

Yet again, another critique of rural development projects comes from Latin America in which the basic assumptions on which rural development are based are questioned (see eg Mabogunje, 1980:103). These critics point out that these development projects derive their impetus from modernisation theories, which are imbued with the proyestismo ideology which assumes that -

> "production in the inefficient antiquated agrarian sector in under-developed countries can be stimulated simply through modernisation efforts involving massive injections of advanced technology and outside capital, without any fundamental change in the existing agrarian sector" (1980:104).

The fact that the value system and traditional forms of production organisation ultimately come to have bearing on the modern agricultural practices is widely recognised. It is observed among certain Nigerian farmers that the adoption of export crop cultivation was influenced by adhering to the traditional farming methods (1980:101).

Traditional techniques continued to be used along with the cultivation and processing of export crops which meant that Nigerian farmers' response to the economic situation was incomplete.

Dogma In Development Planning

Critics such as Singh (1986) designate programmes of development as 'dogma' in development planning mainly because such programmes are wedded to preconceived ideologies (eg crude modernisation theory), as substitute for full empirical research.

1. Rural Fundamentalism

Promoters of rural development have recently been criticised as being rural fundamentalists (Singh, 1986). In contrast to the developed world whose development resources are concentrated in the urban sector, rural development planning stresses the importance of the rural sector. Singh states that -

> "in their enthusiasm to promote the cause of rural development, the promoters of this school of thought usually lend their disregard or underplay the linkage between the rural and the urban subsectors of the economy" (1986:25).

This outlook makes promoters of rural development rather similar to economist proponents of the dual economy model, which conceives of, on the one hand, a separated

agricultural, unorganised traditional sector, and on the other hand a modern economically advanced urban sector in Third World countries.

2. Agricultural Fundamentalism

The second 'dogma' - to use Singh's term - in rural development theory is that of agricultural growth being taken as the engine of development. In contradistinction to industrial fundamentalism, this school of thought considers the concentration of investment resources in agriculture as a prerequisite for income generation. Income generated from this source is expected to be transferred to finance rural industrialisation (Singh, 1986). Its main concept is self-reliance. This school, again, pays little attention to the linkage between agriculture and industry, both the so-called forward and backward linkages. Criticism argues that if agriculture is to be self-sustaining it should rely on industrial inputs at cheap prices that can only be manufactured locally. To secure the necessary inputs it is necessary to foster industrial progress on an equal footing with agriculture. Furthermore, the argument goes, industry stimulates agricultural growth as the former provides marketing outlets for goods produced in the agricultural sector. Consequently, development of both sectors of the national economy is further facilitated as the two subsectors become mutually reinforcing. One example repeatedly cited for linking traditional agriculture and industry is the integrated rural development strategy in Israel (Singh, 1986).

Agricultural fundamentalism, moreover, does not escape the criticism directed to it concerning income redistribution -

> "Agricultural fundamentalism has generally resulted in growth without development mainly because of the lack of the linkage between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors and partly because of the distribution of income being skewed in favour of big landlords" (Singh, 1986:26).

3. Planning Fundamentalism

Rural development planning provides the framework within which rural development is to be achieved. In addition, planning constructs general guidelines for sound goal achievement. With the attainment of independence nearly all developing nations are engaged in planning their economies, including the Sudan. It is argued that planning qualifies a developing nation to secure foreign aid as it represents a sense of commitment to development. Being ill-suited to laissez-faire economic principles, developing countries are obliged to adhere to state regulation. However, counter-arguments see planning as a recurrent development dogma unless it reveals concrete benefits from the utilisation of scarce resources within the shortest time scheduled (Singh, 1986; Mehta, 1984). As stated earlier, policy-makers are influenced in their development plans by the dominant theoretical schools of thought. Wenger remarks the following -

> "Already it can be seen that the selection of experts by the government or agency involved in itself

represent value judgement, which can affect the nature of the policy which will be ultimately adopted" (Wenger, 1982:7).

Thus, the experience with rural development exhibits considerable divergence between theory and practice which is, perhaps, attributable to arm-chair professionals who are usually divorced from the rural scene, but, more importantly, often influenced by western ideologies that are inimical to local values and traditions.

CHAPTER 3

The Setting:

Social and Economic Organisation in the Nuba Mountains

Prior to investigating the Habila scheme proper we need to furnish basic ethnographic data on the Nuba Mountains region as this relates to the socio-economic background of the scheme and to major relevant social trends and socio-political structure. The aim is to bring to the fore the social and cultural factors impinging on and directly affecting the process of rural development in the region. The basic sources upon which this description draws include Nadel (1947), Tothill (1948), Henderson (1953), Barbour (1961), Nasr (1971), Iten (1979), Stevenson (1984) and Baumann (1980; 1984; 1987).

The Nuba Mountains cover an area of approximately 30,000 square miles in South Kordofan, Sudan, situated between Long 29° and 31°31'E and Lat 10° and 12° 30'N. The area lies between the 450mm and 850mm mean annual isohyets, and the soil is composed of rich clay and gardud (ie mixture of clay and soil). It is well watered by the summer rains which provide rich vegetation with acacia and heavy grass. As part of the savanna formation, rainfall starts at May or June and lasts until October. Fertility of the land increases gradually as one moves from the north to the south where a network of wadi beds (valleys) is manifest.

The area is surrounded by a chain of sporadic hills which rise up to 3,000 feet above the plains and 5,000 feet above sea level.

The Nuba are a diverse ethnic group speaking a variety of dialects, but in common use the Arabic language as a lingua franca. The majority of the Nuba have professed Islam, though a few are still pagans and Christians. The population numbers approximatley 800,000 people who are predominantly agriculturists, practicing subsistence cultivation. The main crops grown include dura, cotton, sesame, tobacco and vegetables. Dura is the main staple crop for the inhabitants and occupies most of the area under cultivation. Cultivation is generally practiced on three main types of farms. In the vicinity of the family household there is the house farm run exclusively by women. Women use this farm for the cultivation of crops such as okra, chillies, pepper and beans for home consumption. In the neighbourhood of the hills there are the hill farms, and further, in the plains, there are the far farms. The latter types are used by men, in collaboration with women, for the cultivation of dura and other crops. The Nuba also keep animals such as cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys. In addition, some poultry and pigs are raised though the latter is in decline with the spread of Islam throughout the region. The animals are valuable for supplying milk to the household members and as a means of storing wealth. Animals also provide part of the bride-wealth and constitutes ceremonial expenditure on such occasions as

cicatrization, circumcision and marriage. Donkeys on the other hand are the main means of transportation for the Nuba peasants.

Cattle is grazed by the young Nuba while the elders take care of the farming activities and the domestic affairs. In the wet season the cattle are taken further to the north in the Qoz to avoid crop damage in the far farms. In the dry season the cattle graze close to the family farms so as to provide manure for the preservation of soil fertility. In the near past cattle was also kept as a symbol of prestige and social status; but with the increasing circulation of money in the economy this practice has declined in importance. Cattle are largely in the ownership of other settled tribes in the area such as the Baggara Arabs, the Messiriya and the Hawazma. The Baggara and the Messiriya follow a life of subsistence cultivation and cattle raising, though subsistence farming is recently gaining importance over animal husbandry. This has led to the increasing sedentarisation of these groups with the consequence that pressure on the land is becoming manifest.

Land Tenure and Agricultural Operations

The predominant form of land tenure prior to the introduction of the Habila scheme and the issuing of the Unregistered Land Act of 1970 was the traditional communal ownership of land. The Unregistered Land Act stipulates that all unregistered Land belongs to the government. This mainly applies to that part of the agricultural land which

was traditionally labelled as the no-man's-land and was, therefore, accessible to every member of the community. In the traditional system of communal land ownership, membership in the community entitles individuals to hold land. A recognised member establishes the right to particular land by clearance, borrowing or inheritance. Distribution of land and the settlement of disputes over land between community members was the responsibility of the village shaikh. At present, with the exception of land claimed by the state under the provisions of the Unregistered Land Act, individual use applies to all cultivable land in the region. In accordance with tradition, land is seldom, if at all, sold or purchased. In the patrilineal Nuba societies land is inherited by the elder son or divided equally by the sons. In the matrilineal societies, on the other hand, land passes to the sister's son or to the brothers. The matrilineal system is nowadays giving way to the patrilineal kinship system and as a result most of the land passes from father to son.

Women's contribution in agriculture is indispensable; no less valuable than that of men. In addition to running domestic household affairs Nuba women assist in the cultivation of the family farm, mainly in sowing, winnowing and planting operations. In the traditional system, it is they who are engaged in the brewing of beer for the work parties recruited on a reciprocal basis. Each family owns a small plot of land cultivated by family members. The different types of farms - the hill farms, house farms and the far

farms - are designed to take advantage of the different ecological niches in the region. This advantage is not, however, fully exploited since family land cannot be expanded sufficiently, given the low level of technology.

The techniques of agriculture remain traditional and simple as the bulk of the agricultural work is carried out by hand. The agricultural tools include the axe for cutting the bushes, the torea for weeding, the munjal for harvesting and the daggaga for threshing the crop. These tools are manufactured by the local smiths, especially those residing in the big urban towns such as Kadugli and Dilling. Most of the peasants get their tools on purchase from the market at relatively low prices.

Community Solidarity and Allegiances

The Nuba are characterised by their strong community solidarity and inter-community allegiances which find expression at celebrations of harvesting (locally called the orinyate), and also in wrestling between members of different communities. This stimulated a sense of competition between the various villages as well as individual community pride and cohesion (Baumann, 1987). In the near past, features of a particular community which distinguished it from others used to be explained at the supernatural and the cultural levels.

For example, Nadel has shown that the Nuba farmers of Tira and Moro were considered by other neighbouring communities as excellent farmers not because they "concentrated more

completely on agricultural work but also because they possessed a certain magic which no other tribe could emulate" (Nadel, 1947:22). These are the cultural factors seen at the macro-community level.

There is also considerable cultural variability between the Nuba indigenes and the Arab settlers in the area. Baumann argues that the category, Arabs, in the Nuba Mountains region includes the Baggara Arabs whom we mentioned earlier and, in addition, a group of Jellaba merchants and officials from the northern and western parts of the Sudan (1987:63). But in spite of the fact that the majority of the Nuba communities continue to cling to their traditional customs and values, they are receptive to Islamic ideology and the Arab ways of life and material culture. The penetration of Islam and the Arabic language was facilitated by the presence of the Arab settlers who possess a culture seemingly superior from the point of view of the indigenous communites. Complete assimilation of the Nuba in respect of the Arabic and Islamic culture is restricted due to the hostility between the Arabs and the Nuba villagers. The origin of this hostility goes back to the pre-colonial era and was concomitant with the inter-tribal wars of that time. Jackson observed that in the early days of the immigration of the Baggara into the Nuba Mountains, they seized the fertile land and "drove the Nuba back into their fastness" (Jackson, 1955:172). As a result the Nuba occupied the less fertile land in the neighbourhood of the hills and continued to pursue a very low level subsistence

agriculture. Related to this is, also, the fact that the Nuba populations became distributed into wider and sparse settlements thereby restricting inter-community solidarity and cohesion. The position which the Nuba have occupied vis-a-vis the Arabs since then is one of the underdog; "the hill Nuba never succeeded in asserting themselves against the Arbs as did the Fur" (1955:201). The Arabs, by relegating the Nuba to the less fertile land were able to command the bulk of the fertile land. In consequence they were the first in the region to use hired paid labour in place of family labour. They are also responsible for the introduction of the recent changes in the Nuba economy at large. In 1947 Nadel observed that rifles, clothes, salt and iron were the items first introduced by the Arabs in the tribal economy (1947:70). Paid labour was recruited by minority Jellaba merchants to work on cotton plantations which since the 1920's received encouragement on the part of the colonial administration. The rural markets came to be dominated by these merchants, who could supply sugar, tea and clothes which came to be increasingly in demand by the local villagers. The magnitude of change in the local economy could be discerned from a geographer's description-

> "The weekly markets bring Nuba and Baggara together, and give the merchants a chance to sell their imported wares. With the growth of the cotton trade, the Nuba beginning to come to market in lorries with a sack of their produce, rather than to ride there on donkeys. they buy sugar and tea and ornaments for the women, and there is increasing demand for coloured robes for

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the women to wear on special occasions. The larger markets depend less on the Nuba or Baggara than on the official, police, and soldiery for their customers" (Barbour, 1961:177).

The term Jellaba bears some derogatory connotations. It refers to those rich merchants coming from the Northern provinces of the Sudan to amass wealth in the less favourable and economically backward regions so as to further their own advancement. Such derogation derives from notions held on the part of the indigenes that such commercial orientation implies manipulation and deceitful mercantile practices. This outlook is reinforced by the villagers' recognition that engagement in trade of this type jeopardizes communal moral values since at the altar of mercantile values modern trade transforms face-to-face and personal relations into new impersonal ones. For this reason the Jellaba are given little respect by the Nuba peasants who in turn came to treat them with circumspection. All in all, the Jellaba and other Arab groups, by virtue of their solid mercantile base, have theoretically become well equipped to respond to any state-initiated approach for the development of the region. The Nuba peasants, working as they do on smallholdings, could not produce over and above subsistence requirements. The profile of their traditional agricultural economy portrays a very poorly developed local infrastructure. Their rivals, the Jellaba, are progressive groups but on their part do not make any contribution to community development

since their efforts are directed toward extracting wealth from the region. Baumann describes the position these groups occupy in the local economy and the role they are apt to play, which effectively leads to the sabotage of rural development, he states that -

> "The settlement of Jellaba merchants that in most towns of the Nuba Mountains has taken place from the 1950s, has been culturally antagonising and socially divisive, and it has done little for productive rural development" (1987:195-196).

Policies Toward the Nuba

The totality of conditions surrounding and shaping the Nuba people's material existence today cannot be adequately understood without reference to the colonial administration's 'Nuba policy' of the 1920's and 1930's. The encouraging economic development that took place in the region with the introduction of rain-cotton schemes opened new horizons for the Gillan (the then Governor of Kordofan region) administration as regards enhancing Nuba mental capacity to make development a self-sustained process. For Gillan, the Nuba problem was twofold: the existence of different Nuba 'stocks', stages of civilisation, multiplicity of dialects and cultures on the one hand, and the contiguity between these Nuba stocks and the Arabs on the other (Henderson, 1953). Having defined the Nuba problem in such terms, Gillan posed the following intricate question -

> "Can we evolve a structure or a series of structures to fit all these cultures and stages of civilisation? Can we at the same time preserve all that is best in the Nuba side by side with an Arab civilisation? ...Can the Nuba ... maintain his traditions and culture in the face of these new conditions, and what steps can the government take to help him" (1953:497).

Explicit in educational policy for the Nuba was the idea of fostering schooling modelled as close as possible upon Christian establishments. However, the closeness between the Nuba and the Arabs was one of the bottlenecks in respect of Christianisation becoming a sustained process. This is so because the administration believed that acculturation of the Nuba in respect of Arab material culture would of necessity imply their conversion into Islam (Nasr, 1971). It had also become plain that the introduction of rain-grown cotton cultivation stimulated the migration of a considerable proportion of the hill populations into the plains. Such migration brought the Nuba villagers into even closer contact with the Arabs (Nasr, 1971; Baumann, 1987).

For Nuba educational policy to achieve its target of preserving the Nuba culture and tradition intact from Arabic-Islamic influence the Arabic language had to be excluded from being the principal medium of instruction (Nasr,1971). It was believed, Nasr argues, that the selection of the Arabic language as a medium of instruction would be

irrational since it implies the exposure of Nuba pupils to Arabic literature and, consequently, greater Islamization. To reduce the influence of Arabic on the indigenous people a policy of separating Arab and Nuba pupils was then advocated. Pupils of Arab extraction could also receive missionary education with the consent of their parents. As for Nuba pupils, while they were separated, "Gillan for a time successfully advocated teaching [them] Arabic by using a transliteration in Roman script" (Baumann, 1987:13). However, the success of this primary schooling was largely piecemeal since an array of practical and technical difficulties later presented itself. According to Nasr, the government discovered in 1930 that the four government Kuttabs (Ar: Muslim elementary schools) located at Kadugli, Dilling and Rashad town were also teaching Islam to Nuba pupils. "The schools", he posits,"were becoming centres of propaganda for Islam" (Nasr, 1971:24). A decree was then issued to stop instructing Nuba pagans Arabic and Mohammadan religion, but it did not have any concrete success. As a complement to these problems were the technical and practical difficulties the missionaries faced with respect to Romanized transliteration of Arabic. To quote Nasr -

> "The technical difficulty was that of Arabic vowels, and the practical difficulties were two: to find suitable native teachers (the government and mission would not accept a Muslim Arab teacher), and to provide literature. A certain ex-soldier was found

and appointed as a teacher, and it was hoped that other native teachers would turn up. A Nuba Arabic Reader was written in Roman script with additon of a few extra symbols, duplicated and sent out in a hurry with a number of errors" (1971:25-26).

In the face of these difficulties it became apparent to Gillan that a 'Nuba renaissance' independent of Arabic-Islamic influence was not forthcoming. Arabicization, in the meantime, gained an increasing momentum, a phenomenon attested to by the fact that a considerable proportion of the Nuba adopted Arabic language as the basic lingua franca. However, despite the practical difficulty inherent in Nuba educational policy Gillan never set himself the task of correcting his policy to meet the interests of the Nuba people. He foresaw the continuation of such policy being likely to end up in one of two possible outcomes. As quoted in Baumann -

> "Even if the experiment is eventually a failure it probably does not matter. What does matter is that for the next 20 years or so the Nuba should have the best chance of finding his place in the sun. If he fails (or if we let him fail) he will <u>become a third-rate</u> Arab and may as well write in Arabic character if he writes at all. If he succeeds he will <u>remain a Nuba</u> in whatever type of character he finds he can write" (1982:12).

Ethnographic research undertaken during the Newbold (the successor to Gillan) administration in the 1930's came up with findings which later provided guidelines for sound future educational policy. Paradoxically, such research, provided by Nadel in his monograph The Nuba (1947), turned out to be instrumental in carrying Gillan's Nuba policy to its limits. The monograph helped isolate those aspects of the Nuba culture and beliefs most inimical to Islam, and which could safely be encouraged. "According to Newbold", Nasr argues, "the Kujurs [Possession and rain priests] who are bulwarks against Islam were the only support the government had against crime and immorality in some areas" (Nasr, 1971:30). However, in another context, Newbold plainly admits that with administration being his profession and responsibility, the secular administration of a country should be influenced by the Christian ethic and virtues (Henderson, 1953:462). The mission, for its part, was not sympathetic to enhancing the Nuba belief in the supernatural nor to the fostering of native practices. While government looked upon the Kujurs as instrumental to ensuring control and social order, the mission looked upon them as "pagan witch-doctors and foes" (Nasr, 1971:30).

Meanwhile, the British administration made great strides towards introducing the native administration system in order to involve traditional leaders in the running of local affairs. Such leaders as the mek (Ar: Paramount chief) and the shaikhs (Ar: village chiefs), were considered ideal as the agents for project execution in the

various territorial units to be affected by the agricultural policy (1953:495). Illiterate though the mek and the shaikhs might be, the administration was able later to integrate them in the native administration system, to adjudicate on matters of Nuba law. Ironically the Kujurs were also often to be incumbent in such chiefly office, but according to Nasr, they enjoyed limited judicial power as regards the preservation of social order.

These facts historically underscore the present day weak and fragmented nature of traditional leadership in the Nuba Mountains region. Moreover, from among those Nuba villagers who were successful in getting access to primary education a sizeable number took to labour migration in the 1950's (Baumann, 1987; Nasr, 1971). The rain-grown cotton-schemes' performance continued to deteriorate due to the impact of World War Two as well as the World Depression of the 1930's. The economic infrastructure of the region inherited at independence was characteristically poor, supporting sparsely populated villages in fragmented administrative units. Administratively, the traditional leaders, the shaikh or village chief, were ill-equiped to handle local matters related to village welfare. To some extent the government did succeed in unifying the fragmented ethnic groups, but this unification was only secured spatially. This was the inevitable outcome of the commercialisation of the economy, the slight improvement in feeder roads and communication, and the expansion of trade,

spearheaded by the progressive Jellaba group. This flourishing trade was stimulated by the abolition of the Closed District Act in 1937, which encouraged the immigration of Arab traders into the region (Nasr, 1971). The Jellaba trading activities and their coexistence with the indigenous Nuba villagers accentuated the cultural heterogeneity characteristic of Nuba society. Paradoxically the intensified contacts between these diverse ethnic groups have ushered in a heightened cultural consciousness among the Nuba. "It is only recently", Stevenson argues, "with the increased contacts all over the hills, that some sense of a common Nuba-ness has developed" (Stevenson, 1984:11). However, this sense is not overtly expressed beyond the boundaries of the local community since it does not entail the dissolution of inter-community rivalry (eg as manifest in wrestling and sometimes open hostility between communities). For Baumann, the analysis presented at another level, while a sense of common Nuba-ness obtains -

> "This 'Nuba-ness'... tends to be defined not on the strength of what one Nuba group may share with another, but on what separates them from the Arab-Sudanese populations of the region. To define oneself or one's group as Nuba inevitably stresses the distinction from groups which are summarily called Arab, be they Baggara cattle nomads, or merchants or administrators originating from the Northern provinces" (1987:9).

Not only does such a separation between the Nuba indigenes and Jellaba and other Arabs continue to define the position of one group vis-a-vis another; it is also deliberately maintained by the Jellaba since these people occupy the commanding heights of the economy - their exclusive control over domestic trade. While chiefly office may be the prerogative of native elders such prestige never puts them in an advantageous position in relation to the Jellaba. The latter, however, by virtue of their Northern extraction, have, since independence, come to dominate modern state machinery (Shepherd, 1983:298). Due to the lack of an educated elite from the region the post-independence state still continues with its reliance on chiefly office for running village affairs. The shaikh's experience with native administration is deemed sufficient to qualify him for mediating between the people and the rural Councils. The shaikh's role in local government itself is confined to the collection of property and poll taxes. The meagre tax revenue generated from the few privileged and propertied groups has meant that the regional government had little by way of resources at its disposal for advancing facilities and social services to accelerate economic development. In 1971 the people's Land Government Act was passed to encourage popular participation via the creation of a system of elected rural councils answerable to provincial commissioners at the regional level. Under the provisions of this act regional governments have been made administratively autonomous, and have been empowered with more staff and given separate financial responsibilities. The assumption

has been made that regionalisation is the most efficient way of redressing the dualistic economic structure since each independent region would be committed to its own progress. However, the people's local government system has met with severe criticism on the part of students of political economy. Adams, for example, comments -

> "financial powers were not devolved and the potential for non-sectoral integrated planning and implementation at the provincial level was poor between officials in the provincial and district HQs and the people in the countryside" (1982:32).

The havoc the local government system wreaked not only inhibited the economic growth of the less advantaged regions but also drained them of their resources in favour of the urban centres and the central government in particular (cf Rodinelli, 1983). As a consequence labour migration of the Nuba villagers to the urban cities took enormous proportions, motivated by the search for off-farm employment opportunities. One other factor contributing to labour migration relates to the disparity in the levels of living between the Nuba villagers and the progressive Jellaba. This is reflected in the differential lifestyle of both groups. In his ethnographic description of the Jellaba group, Manger maintains that-

> "Diacritical features like dress (jellabia), language (Arabic) in some places, house type and religious piety make them stand out from the locals, especially

in places like the Nuba Mountains which traditionally was, a non-Arabic, non-Muslim area"(Manger, 1984:215).

The drift of large numbers of villagers to urban towns testifies to the growing recognition on the part of these migrants of wealth being a criterion of social status. In addition to urban industral or manual employment the period also witnessed the recruitment in the big cities of Nuba adults as soldiers (Baumann, 1987; Nasr, 1973). The migrants and urban-based soldiers occasionally return to the home village and continue to display concern for their own village's development and welfare (Baumann, 1987). This moral commitment to one's village community is bolstered by the migrants consolidating their power in connection with their gradual participation in the national government. The union these urban-based Nuba people formed, The General Union of the Nuba, despite its limited success in the national parliamentary elections of 1964 is still "well remembered and enjoys considerable sympathy among the urban Nuba" (1987:19). Indigenous leadership, however, remained sporadic and politically insignificant. With the intensive support mirgrants offer their village communities in the face of mounting poverty, the dominant trend which continues to take shape, is the development of consciousness among the Nuba populations. This consciousness emanates, inter alia, from the intensified ties the migrants and settlers have successfully established as a counteraction to the disintegration of communal solidarity concomitant with the forces of rural-urban migration. At the present

time the position of the Nuba could be implied in the following statement: A growing concern on the part of the various communities, expressed in the desire to form co-operative institutions, to allow the villagers to have a share in the economic and political process of the country. Communities studied by a number of anthropologists which displayed a concern for creating cooperatives as a positive step toward that end include the Miri (Baumann, 1987), Kao, Nyaro and Fungor (Iten, 1979), and the Moro (Salih, 1984). This attitude, however, may be contrasted with the scepticism expressed towards cooperatives whose structures imply the inclusion of outsiders, eg the Arabs, officials and Jellaba traders. Involvement in cooperatives with such indisciminate organisation is looked askance at as leading to the accentuation of the inegalitarian relationship between these progressive groups and local villagers.

Development in The Region

The Nuba Mountains region represents a paradox of being one of the most backward parts of western Sudan while, at the same time, being "potentially better suited to balanced development than any other part of the country away from the Nile" (Barbour, 1961:179). The country has long been neglected on the part of the colonial administration and the post-independence development plans. In common with other parts of western Sudan, the Nuba Mountains province was declared by the colonial administration a closed area in 1913 in accordance with the Closed Area Ordinance of 1902. The aim was to restrict the spread of Islam and Arab

influence and to "build up a series of self-contained racial or tribal units with the structure and organisation based upon the indigenous custom" (Ayoub, 1976:177). But due to the failure to achieve this goal, the order was repealed in 1929. The colonial government made an intense effort to put the economic potential of the area into use and succeeded in introducing short staple American cotton. In 1924 it established the Nuba Mountains Cotton Corporation which was assigned the responsibility of ginning and marketing cotton production. It was also assigned the function of freely distributing cotton seeds to the Nuba farmers who were willing to cultivate cotton in their own landholdings.

Peak commercial development in the region was witnessed with the establishment of eight ginneries as cotton production showed enormous success in the 1920's and 1930'. During World War Two the production of cotton showed continuous decline and later by independence in 1956 recorded its lowest production target. The expansion of cotton and trade was spearheaded by the Jellaba merchants and this engendered change in the structure of the local economy. The reason behind the decline in cotton production in the area was that cultivation of dura came to be more important as a result of rising food prices; this culminated in the late 1960's and 1970's (see eg Salih, 1984:200). But most importantly cotton itself was also competing with dura and sesame for scarce labour, though,

as well as this, cotton's price has been declining (Thimm, 1979:29). Table 1 shows this trend of declining cotton production since the mid-1960's (see page 89).

In 1967 a rehabilitation project was implemented and the Nuba Mountains Agricultural Production Corporation (NMAPC), a state-sponsored organisation, was made responsible for the promotion of modernisation in the region. The Corporation's major job was the provision of tractors and services to groups of farmers who undertook the initial operations of clearing and weeding by manual labour. Today the size of holdings currently in operation varies from a minimum of 12 feddans to 26 feddans but, according to Thimm, the majority of the Nuba farmers continue to cultivate their own traditional farms (Thimm, 1979).

The importance of the NMAPC and the modernisation projects under its sponsorship is that it led to the creation of employment opportunities for the local inhabitants who could combine traditional cultivation with hiring out their labour in the schemes. The magnitude of this could be seen in the following description by Baumann -

> "Wage-labour on large-scale schemes in some areas, earnings from small-scale cash-cropping in others, and income remittances from labour migration have combined to introduce cash transactions into even remoter parts of the Nuba Mountains" (Baumann, 1987:18).

Other benefits derived from the schemes include better access roads which "have come to the region earlier than could be expected without the scheme" (Thimm, 1979:32). However, the schemes are not without their own shortcomings. Organisational and administrative problems due to the shortage of skilled manpower adversely affected the schemes' policies and its operational efficiency (Baumann, 1987:18; Thimm, 1979:32). Furthermore, being biased towards the production of cotton as a main cash crop, with only little attention given to food crops, the scheme could not succeed in contributing to self-sufficiency in food production. Dura occupies only a smaller proportion of the total cropped area despite being in greater demand by local villagers. The prospect of the scheme to expand into the areas which have not been affected by modernisation such as south-east Nuba Mountains is still bleak since a host of problems persist to adversely affect the schemes performance. Thimm summarises these problems in the following -

> "From the outset of the scheme, progress was erratic for a number of reasons. The original programme to acquire 60 new tractors per year could not be met, and as a result of lack of workshop facilities, spare parts, and fuel shortages, the areas to be modernised fell drastically. This situation was compounded by the lack of technical personnel, adequate housing, and transport, which meant that the supervision of the scheme was impossible. In specific locations problems of domestic water sources, ... soil exhaustion result-

ing from monocropped cotton, and difficulties with farmers who owned and migrated with livestock delayed progress" (Thimm, 1979:32).

Cotton schemes introduced since 1924 and later rehabilitated in the 1960's were and still are ill adapted to bring about a total transformation on the regional economy. The need to foster food production in the Southern Kodofan province led the government into invoking large-scale mechanisation as the appropriate means towards achieving that target.

Table 1
Cotton Statistics NMAPC
(Nuba Mountains Agricultural Production Corporation)

	Acreage (Fed)	Production (KT)	Average Yield (KT/Fed)	Price per (KT) paid to 1st grade	2nd grade	Net Proceeds NMAPC (LS1000)
1965/66	221291	587595	2.65	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1966/67	271690	765340	2.81	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1967/68	142835	363497	2.54	2.0	1.9	n.a.
1968/69	202361	542655	2.68	2.4	1.9	n.a.
1969/70	227103	65698	2.86	2.0	1.9	164.6
1970/71	171642	353465	2.11	2.0	1.9	66.4
1971/72	195726	515151	2.63	2.0	1.9	188.7
1972/73	135700	461820	2.39	2.0	1.9	183.2
1973/74	115393	221723	2.0	2.0	2.5	877.2
1974/75	103511	211429	4.0	3.0	2.75	231.2
1975/76	92667	319342	3.5	3.0	2.75	n.a.
1976/77	115033.5	346132	3.0	3.2	3.0	n.a.

Source: Iten (1979),p153.

CHAPTER 4

The Habila Scheme

The Habila scheme is described by a number of scholars, most of whom are economists, with specific reference to major economic issues such as income redistribution, employment and production efficiency. Affan (1978), Kersany (1983), O'Brien (1978) and Saeed (1982) have discussed these issues and their work will form the basis of my description of the scheme. However, the cooperatives established as part of the scheme are not analysed in any of these writings and are merely made mention of in passing. These are my concern. Although there is a dearth of extensive facts about these cooperatives it is evident that they were unsuccessful; my analysis is intended to bring to bear the broader social and cultural factors which will, almost certainly, have underpinned this lack of success.

The Habila scheme is a large-scale, state-sponsored mechanised scheme introduced in Southern Kordofan in the early 1970's and later extended in 1975/76 with the objective of getting rural development underway. The scheme bears the characteristics of the 'transformation approach' in development planning (see p47) and it is therefore essential that we designate it as such. We have stated in chapter 2 that in spite of the differences inherent in the two main theoretical approaches to development practice - the improvement and the transformation - they may still overlap. We have established that the transformation approach

advocates radical change in both methods of production and types of the production unit, as well as population dislocations and movements and state intervention. The Habila scheme fits squarely in this definition for three main reasons. Firstly, it is state-sponsored and involves the collaboration in the undertaking of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and its International Development Association (IDA). Such joint effort provided the required technological package and capital which enabled the projects to get underway. Secondly, it entails the replacement of traditional smallholder agricultural units by large-scale mechanised farms based on the recruitment of wage labour. Thirdly, it has as its primary objective the formation of agricultural cooperatives as an efficient means of improving the incomes of the participant cultivators. The latter objective is justified on grounds of equity and to spread the benefits of the project into the whole region. As concerns population movements, the scheme was meant to attract a large proportion of migrants from neighbouring regions, especially Northern Kordofan and Darfur and the Southern provinces. Thus, the scheme was meant to revolutionise the overall structure of the traditional sector in the Savanna belt. The ILO report recommended mechanisation policies to deal with labour shortage and rural unemployment. It states that-

> "As long as income opportunities in the traditional sector are low, mechanised rain-fed and irrigated agriculture are capable of transforming income from the modern to the traditional sector via the mechanism of labour migration" (1976:25).

The main thrust of the Habila scheme is that large-scale mechanisation of rain-fed agriculture supported by intensive capital investment is sufficient to harness domestic resources for home consumption as well as for export revenues. The policy towards mechanisation of the savanna belt in Southern Kordofan and particularly in Habila had the following components. The first was to put otherwise uncultivated land resources under cultivation lest its fertility degenerates over time. This was justified by the fact that population pressure over land is minimal and the land itself not claimed by the community. This uncultivated land was traditionally named no-man's-land (see Nadel, 1947), and the government therefore had good cause to make possession of it under the provisions of the Unregistered Land Act of 1970. Secondly, there is the component which relates to the efficiency of machinery as opposed to labour-intensive operations in the clay-plains of Southern Kordofan region. According to O'Brien the traditional system of cultivation was considered to be incapable of making efficient use of land since it is based on a pattern of long fallow cultivation. This system requires that a farmer should at any one time have access to "like five times as much land as he needs to cultivate ... for it takes a number of years for the natural vegetation to grow up again and improve the soil of abandoned plots" (1978:2). The other part of the argument is associated with the low production in traditional agriculture relative to mechanised farming (O'Brien, 1978:2), the underlying assumption being that expansion of cultivation is possible only under

conditions of mechanisation, thanks to the labour-saving property of machinery.

The third component of the mechanisation policy relates to the production of dura and sesame for the self-sufficiency of the local population as part of the objective of improving people's quality of life in general. The fourth component of mechanisation is the state's emphasis on production of a cash crop to facilitate foreign exchange (1978:2).

The Habila scheme is situated between Lat 11° and 12°N and Long 24° and 34° E in the Southern Kordofan province. The scheme as we see it today has been implemented in two phases. The old Habila of 1968 was supplemented by the New Habila in 1970 as part of the Horizontal Expansion Strategy which is basically concerned with the utilisation of the vast fallow reserves in the western savanna for agricultural expansion. The project was selected to provide a nucleus for spreading the benefits of development to the rest of western Sudan which had been hitherto neglected in post-independence national development plans. Thus, the scheme was incorporated in the Five Year Plan of the economic and social development 1970/71-1975/76 which visualizes huge investment in agriculture to accelerate the economy's rate of growth.

The Mechanised Farming Corporation was established in 1968 as a supervisory unit and was assigned the responsibility

of providing loans to farmers and to run the state farms. The World Bank and the International Development Association contributed a sizeable financial support for the importation of tractors and agricultural inputs. In the Five Year Plan of the 1970/71 - 1975/76 a fund of £13.4 million was devoted to the Mechanised Farming Corporation for investment in mechanised farming. Of the total area of 4 million feddans supposed to be put into use in the western Sudan, the plan demarcated an area of 0.3 million feddan in the clay plains of the Nuba Mountains. This was assumed to achieve a target of 50,000 tons of dura and sesame (El Hassan, 1976).

The government allotted the land mainly to private farmers for a 25-year lease period after the issuance of the Unregistered Land Act in 1970. (This perscribes that land outside individual ownership is the legal property of the state.) Eligibility to the leased land and to loans is subject to the condition that applicants should be Sudanese and should necessarily be residents in the scheme area. Secondly, no occupant should have more than one holding of the standard 1,500 feddans. These conditions, according to El Hassan have never been satisfied and most landholder lessees were, in effect, absentee landlords (El Hassan, 1976; Saeed, 1982). The main crops under cultivation are dura and sesame but a tendency towards dura mono-culture was also shown. The Mechanised Farming Corporation recommends following a rotation system in the pattern, dura-sesame-fallow, as specified in the Ten Year Plan 1960-

1970 to facilitate expansion in dura production. Generally the scheme can be divided into three main types of farms. The first is the private sector dominated by private investors who provide tractors with credit assistance from the Agricultural Bank of Sudan. The second type is the supervised schemes, also held by private farmers and financed by the World Bank in collaboration with the Agricultural Bank of Sudan. In this category are the old Habila projects under direct supervision of the Mechanised Farming Corporation. The third type are the state farms whose main job is to undertake experimentation and demonstration. These are run by agricultural officials in an attempt to show the benefits to be derived from farming in this way so as to attract future participation. The co-operative farms fall under the category of supervised private schemes (see above) financed by the World Bank and the Agricultural Bank of Sudan. These farms basically consist of several individual farmers pooling their land, for the purpose of economy of scale; they are encouraged in doing this by the government who will provide them with extension services and credit. Generally, services to investors in the scheme include easy interest of approximately 8-9 per cent on loan from the Agricultural Bank. Under the provisions of the Promotion of Agricultural Investment Act 1976, encouragement was made in the form of partial tax exemption and exemption from customs duties for imported machinery (Simpson and Simpson, 1978:23). According to Saeed (1982) individual farming enterprises, state farms and cooperative farms have these characteristics:

firstly, most of the agricultural operations such as land clearance, preparation, sowing and harvesting are undertaken by different types of discs and tractors. Secondly, all three types of farms depend on hired labour, both permanent and seasonal. The seasonal labour, especially required where landlords are absentee (this includes co-operatives) for undertaking the weeding and harvesting operations. The permanent labourers are tractor drivers, assistants, ghafirs (guards) and wakeels (agents). The agents are managers in the scheme who carry the managerial function on behalf of the absentee landlords or scheme owners. Thirdly, the standard farm size ranges between 1,000-1,500 feddans. Dura and sesame occupy, in theory, 1,000 feddans in the 1,500-feddan type and the remaining 500 should be left fallow as prescribed by the Mechanised Farming Corporation. Dura is extensively cultivated in the area devoted to fallow thereby infringing the regulations of the Mechanised Farming Corporation. Fourth, cooperative schemes and individual private farms are entirely unaffected by extension services which are exclusively devoted to state farms (Saeed, 1982:178-179).

The distribution of the three types of farms is presented in the table below as revealed for the season 1975/76:

Table 2:

Habila Mechanised Schemes

in operation

(1975/76)

Sector	Operating	Licensed
State	6	30
Private	189	205
Cooperative	7	15
Total	202	250

Source: Saeed (1982), p178.

The table shows that individual private farms are the predominanet forms of farms in the scheme area, making a total of 189 schemes out of 202. The cooperative farms in operation account for approximately 50% of the total number of cooperatives licenced by the state. According to Saeed almost "every season cooperative schemes are either rented to private investors to compensate for the cost already incurred by members of the cooperative or liquidated by the cooperative authorities of Dilling" (1982:180). (The cooperatives are also reported to be highly inefficient, but no specific data about this has been given.) The reasons behind the low interest in cooperatives will be empirically examined in chapter 7. Suffice it here to present part of the arguments advanced for the bad performance of cooperatives. It is argued that -

"the official administrative body, the regional office of the Ministry of Cooperation, which is supposed to supervise the societies has failed to provide supervision or facilities which enable the members of these societies to efficiently direct their affairs. No follow up, regular revision and auditing of the financial and agricultural performance of these farms takes place. The office lacks basic information about these societies" (1982:180).

Wage Employment

The feasibility of the Habila scheme should, also, be assessed in terms of the contribution it makes with respect to income distribution and wage employment. The centrality of income redistribution derives from the fact that the scheme is launched in an area that is predominantly peasant, people deriving the bulk of their annual income from abysmally low level subsistence agriculture. The other source of income is the tapping of gum arabic (1982:171). Wage labour as we mentioned earlier is practiced in private, state and cooperative schemes. It draws mainly from the local supply as well as from migrants from the neighbouring regions. Saeed has noticed a substantial rise in wage rates during the harvesting period due to shortages in the labur supply (1982:177). This has resulted in higher proportions of land being devoted to dura cultivation, in contrast to sesame production, as the latter is less-profitable (Affan, 1978:29). Besides, crop yield on

the traditional farm is one factor affecting labour supply in respect of the mechanised farms (Saeed, 1982:177); distance, availability of wage level information to migrants and competition from other schemes could be cited as other important determinants. As a solution to the problem of labour shortage a system of labour recruitment was practised in the early phase of the scheme. Under this system the cost of transporting labour to the scheme area is usually borne by the owner of the scheme. However, during the rainy season this practice tends to be less effective due to logistic difficulties. Of the various agricultural operations, labour is demanded for weeding and harvesting of dura and sesame crops. Labour input and the corresponding wage rates are presented in the following table:

Table 3:
Labour Input and Wage Rates

Operation	Labour input per farm	Mandays per feddan	Wage Rate (piasters per individual)
Weeding	1390	1.6	65
Harvesting sesame	570	3.9	80
Harvesting dura	3230	4.1	42

Source: Affan (1978),p31.

Due to differences in the geographical background of labourers the effect of wage labour on income distribution varies considerably with implications for equity. This is especially true insofar as the former capitalist system of labour recruitment, in which the cost of transporting hired labour was borne by the scheme owner himself, is no longer

practised. Peasants from the scheme area can thus considerably improve their well-being by hiring out their labour in the schemes and at the same time continue to cultivate their traditional farms. This combination of activities is rendered difficult for immigrant labourers due to distance and transportation bottlenecks. Distance works to cut off the migrant from his own home village, who thereby devotes a lesser amount of labour to the family farm. In addition, a good amount of income generated from wage labour is spent on return transportation at the end of the harvesting season. Availability of wage labour in the scheme is, also, affected by macro-economic factors related to the performance of the agricultural labour market in general. As stated by O'Brien -

> "The costs of finding work and travelling to the place of work, which have previously been a separate part of the wage bill incurred by employers, are now entering into the general labour market as elements of the wage rate. Paradoxically, the formation of a national labour market thus entails a regionalisation at the same time, as workers seek to cut costs by finding work as close to home as possible" (O'Brien, 1983:30).

Thus, labourers from Northern Kordofan and Darfur find it prudent to supply labour in the Habila schemes rather than the Gezira or the Rahad. The implications of this on irrigated schemes are far reaching. The amount of labour deflected into employment in the Habila schemes could lead to a substantial rise in the level of wages in the irrigated

schemes, to attract more labour. This process feeds on itself thereby impelling employers in Habila to raise the wage rate. One other effect on the Gezira scheme is reported by O'Brien in respect of cotton-picking labour. O'Brien reported that due to the mounting costs of cotton-picking operations the management of several schemes, including the Gezira, in 1978, "had suspended cotton-picking labour recruitment activities" (1983:29).

However, local peasants are not fully satisfied with wage labour in the schemes since home production for family consumption still rides high in traditional agriculture. This attitude persists despite the high wage rates offered in mechanised farms relative to the level of wages in the rural areas in general. The ILO, for instance, remarks that mechanised farms, in 1976, pay 40 to 50 piasters per day besides food and medical care to labourers (ILO, 1976:276). To make peasant traditional farming a viable enterprise, a Nuba peasant responds to both opportunities (ie family farming and wage employment) at the same time. The common trend is for the demand for labour to increase. This, in addition to the aforementioned reasons, stems from the fact that the amount of labour demanded rises proportionately to the farm size in operation in the corresponding season. The size of land is shown to be expanding due to deteriorating fertility and to the cultivation of the unauthorised land (Shepherd, 1983). Thus the total area cultivated in the mechanised lands of Habila in 1975/1976 was 170,490 feddans (Saeed, 1982:168), but in 1979/80

it was as high as half a million feddans (Salih, 1984:210). However, the overall employment effect of mechanised schemes, according to Affan, is not high. The table below shows the overall situation with respect to seasonal labour in the private and supervised sectors:

Table 4:
Seasonal Labour in the Private and Supervised Sectors

Operation	Total Man-days req'd	Length period	No. of persons req'd	Time
Weeding	300,000	22	14,000	Aug-Sept
Harvesting - Sesame	68,000	15	4,500	October
Harvesting - Dura	700,000	90	7,500	Dec-Apr

Source: Affan (1978), p32.

The overall employment effect falls well below the expected rate of labour absorption. Of the 10,000 to 14,000 seasonal jobs per 100,000 feddans the schemes are expected to generate only 7,000 to 8,000 are actually reported for the peak season which lasts for only three weeks (Keddeman and Ali, 1978:8). As a result of this low labour absorption ratio, the ILO report concludes that the scheme, in fact, tends to accentuate inequality by "making the rich richer" (ILO, 1976:273).

As sound measures to redress the inegalitarian effect of the mechanised farming the report suggests a levy of tax on scheme operators and a creation of cooperatives to attract more tenant participants (1976:273). But both attempts at

redressing inequality are ruled out in respect of the situation of the Habila scheme. Shepherd adduces sufficient evidence for this -

> "It is difficult to incorporate local people into mechanised farming since the level of capital accumulation locally is so low. The [existing] lessees are completely strangers to the area... and in the eyes of local people make no contribution to the area: they avoid local taxes which are in any case exiguous, they take away their dura and their tractors,... These grievances would be exclusive in Darfur, are still politically significant in Kordofan, and will undoubtedly contribute to the present regionalistic orientation of Sudanese political life" (1983:316).

Problems identified in the mechanised schemes in general relate to a failure to follow the rotation system as stipulated by the Mechanised Farming Corporation. In addition, illegal expansion into undemarcated land has resulted in an interference with the grazing lands of the cattle nomads. Most affected of these are the Baggara Arabs who have traditionally depended on the ecological niche of the Southern Kordofan province during the dry season. As a result, environmental degradation and competition for grazing and soil infertility have made investment in mechanised farming less encouraging. But this process of illegal expansion on unauthorised land and declining soil fertility started to feed on itself: in order for

investment and consequently productivity to be viable under the declining soil fertility, the only possible alternative is to expand the area under cultivation.

In terms of profitability to private investors, it has been estimated that an annual average profit of up to LS20,000 could be realised in good agricultural seasons (see eg Shepherd, 1983:308). However, the production profile portrays a declining productivity over the life period of the scheme, particularly during the 1970's.

Table 5 furnishes data on this declining trend from 1970 to 1976.

Table 5
Average Yield in Habila Scheme (1970-76)
(metric ton)

Yr:	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74	1974/75	1975/76	1976/77
	0.479	0.382	0.382	0.377	0.269	0.231	0.316

Source: Saeed (1982), p169.

The schemes to a large extend succeeded in creating wage employment for local people as well as for migrants who could supplement their income on traditional farming. Not only did labour migration result in improving the levels of income for seasonal labourers but it contributed, in turn, to redressing the problem of urban unemployment. Prior to the introduction of the scheme the majority of seasonal migrants either sought employment in the Gezira scheme in the Central region or concentrated on the urban centres, which could hardly absorb these unskilled workers. Income

derived from seasonal migration is estimated to be in the range LS50 to LS100 for one season and the number of recipients averages between 7 to 10 million persons (Keddeman and Ali, 1978:4). One of the most dramatic effects of seasonal migration has been its contribution to inter-regional balances, as testified to by the ILO report for the Sudan (1976).

Effects on Traditional Agriculture and The Nuba Peasantry

One of the major objectives of the Habila scheme is to genuinely contribute to the self-sufficiency of the local population and to improve the quality of their life. The stimulus to improve the well-being of peasants and their families originates from the recognition that traditional agriculture as such is incapable of making a significant transformation of the pre-existing socio-economic structure. This holds true, it is presumed, so long as investment in peasant smallholding is very low. It has been argued that small farmers "do not produce and earn enough to lift themselves from dire poverty" (ILO, 1976:XVIII). The assessment of the Habila scheme, therefore, should be based on the scheme's effect on local producers in terms of popular participation, to see the degree to which it has achieved its objective of reaching the rural poor. We have already mentioned that the cooperatives which are meant to attract participants are falling apart and therefore do not command interest among the Nuba villagers. Before investigating the nature of the villagers' response to the creation of cooperatives it is essential, here, to adduce some

evidence for the low investment in traditional peasant farming.

Economic Explanations for Low Investment: towards the importance of social variables

One of the major obstacles retarding traditional agriculture in the Nuba Mountains province is the lack of credit facilities. The absence of credit institutions which could provide sufficient credit to small farmers at the appropriate time implies that less capital could be devoted to investment in agriculture. This could also result in the cultivation of only a smaller quantity of land, as the amount of capital at the farmer's disposal is very limited. One of the devices the local producers adopt is to rely on relatives or a merchant of acquaintance as the only means to secure credit. The other factor relates to the absence of pricing policy for food crops, which might stimulate greater investment in traditional farming. The argument points to marketing bottlenecks that constrain small farmers to sell their farm output at the farm gate at very low prices. This problem is accentuated by competition on the part of large-scale capitalist farmers (associated with the Habila scheme) whose presence can dampen the price level of food crops. A third factor is the unavailability of fertilizers and improved seed varieties to small farmers. Part of the argument advanced in this connection attributes the failure on the part of small farmers to apply fertilizers to the absence of extension education (Affan, 1978). Another argument may see the absence of a

subsidised fertilizer policy as the reason for low investment in traditional agriculture. The subsidised fertilizer policy guarantees cheap fertilizer delivery to small farmers and is meant to enhance the economic efficiency in terms of cost reduction. One other possible explanation is that given the remoteness of the Nuba peasants' settlements from the urban centres, it would be very difficult for a peasant to get adequate information on market behaviour. Such information is the sine qua non for rational decision-making for investment in traditional agriculture.

Speaking in terms of cost efficiency, Theodre Schultz (1964) argues that in contrast to mechanised farming, investment in peasant farming is not attractive to peasants, nor is it a rational decision for peasant producers. It is argued that investment in traditional agriculture increases net returns only slightly. Furthermore, it would be very discouraging to small farmers since such decisions are necessarily made under conditions of risk and uncertainty. Testing Schultz's assumption for traditional agriculture in the southern Kordofan region one finds that net returns in peasant farms do not reveal what Shultz postulates. Table 6 shows that investment in peasant farms, contrary to Schultz, could be highly efficient and rewarding:

Table 6:
Items for Producing a Feddan of Dura in both Traditional and Mechanised Sectors Habila (1975/76)

Item	Traditional	Mechanised	Units
Yield	366.0	453.5	K.g
Price	34.4	43.0	p.t
Gross return	12.590	19.673	LS
Total cost	7.050	13.430	LS
Net Return	5.540	6.243	LS
% of net return to total cost	84.3	46.6	

Source: Saeed (1982), p170.

It is clear from the table that investment in traditional farming makes a percentage net return in peasant farming of 84.3 which is absolutely high. Also in comparison with mechanised farming, traditional argriculture generates high percentage of net return on investment.

This indicates that to explain the stagnation and lack of innovativeness and investment in peasant agriculture in terms of efficiency or economic variables alone is not sufficient (cf. Baric, 1967). It has been argued that improvement in traditional techniques to generate such net returns may "affect social relations upon which rational farming depended and that, therefore, economic action cannot be separated from the social context in which it operates" (Ortiz, 1967:191-192). This, as I perceive it, squarely applies to the context of both the traditional Nuba peasant (as discussed here) and to the Habila scheme.

The Habila scheme has injected a massive technological package into the area and sizeable capital inputs, yet it

especially failed to attract peasants to form cooperative societies to improve their lot. On the contrary, the Nuba peasants have continued to undertake traditional cultivation in the home areas at that low level of investment mentioned above. It is my contention that low innovativeness and investment in peasant farming (be this in the home areas or in connection with the Habila scheme) should receive a social diagnosis as a complement to economic factors. The inadequacy of economic explanation alone is testified to by the fact that economists have encouraged the Nuba peasant to participate in the scheme thinking that basic economic bottlenecks (capital, technology, etc) have been removed, yet to no avail.

It is therefore essential that we pose our assumptions for the forthcoming anthropological exposition. We assume, in line with Baric, that under given circumstances, to consider a course of action financially less profitable or more profitable "is not necessarily a sufficient explanation of the emergence of a certain form of behaviour in a field of action which is essentially social as well as economic" (1967:261). Secondly, we assume that albeit that behaviour is intrinsically social and economic we can "meaningfully distinguish social and 'economic' in an empirical situation" (1967:254). In this connection we would consider as 'economic' "those aspects of behaviour which are specifically related to the material advantage of a mixed socio-economic act" (1967:254).

The drastic avoidance of the new economic opportunities afforded by the Habila scheme - tractors, credit, etc - can be related to social factors which previous discussion in the literature has only partly touched upon but never set itself to examine empirically and explain. But first, in the following chapter, I set myself to explain low investment in the traditional peasant farming by reference to the context of the total situation (social and economic) in which decisions to invest are made. I shall indicate that the Habila scheme's presence indeed seems to reinforce the pre-existing trends in traditional agriculture and could, therefore, bar peasant effective participation in the scheme especially as active members in cooperatives. For example, we shall see that the Habila scheme prompts migration outside the area (as people's materialistic desires increase). This is ironic, since presumably the scheme was devised to have exactly the opposite effect.

CHAPTER 5

Socio-Cultural Factors in the Nuba Mountains Region

Major explanations, and implications, relating to the Nuba peasants' lack of commitment to cooperatives in the Habila scheme are presented here. Explicit in the discourse is my predilection for actor-oriented/meaning-oriented approaches. It follows that the failure of cooperatives will be understood in terms of both strategic and cultural considerations. In this chapter, I shall deal with matters relating to kinship, labour migration (or mobility) and conspicuous consumption and the ideology of consumerism, and their effects on investment in peasant farming. In the next chapter, I shall present, more extensively, the reason for the lack of commitment among present-day Nuba peasants to cooperative schemes.

Kinship

For the majority of households in the Nuba Mountains region, kinship constitutes the core social relationship in which people's life is embedded and finds expression. Anthropologists (eg Faris, Nadel and Stevenson) have described the Nuba society as a kinship society. The dominant kinship terminology in most of the Nuba tribes is the classificatory type, in which kinship terms include people who are both biologically close and biologically distant. Kinship is also extended to cover sociologically significant relationships. A mother's brother may adopt a sister's son and consider the latter as a family member.

The kinship system, generally speaking, is very elaborate. Nadel described it as follows -

> "As a father's brothers and sisters are classified as 'fathers' and 'mothers' (married to other 'mothers' and 'fathers'), the children of brothers and sisters are themselves 'brothers' and 'sisters' to each other, and sons and daughters to the parent generation" (1947:101).

The principal social groupings identified in the region include the nuclear family, the lineage, the clan and clan sub-division, the village and the tribe (Stevenson, 1984: 95). With the exception of those parts of the south western Nuba Mountains studied by Faris, today most of the societies in the region are classified as patrilineal kinship groups (Faris, 1968:45). The smallest social unit, the nuclear family, consists of a man, his wife or wives and their unmarried children; it shares the same household. However, the sociologically extended kinship terminology and the reciprocal identification of parents-in-law and children-in-law imply that an elaborate network of social relationships allows for great cooperation among such units. Cooperation between close and distant kin is expressed on a number of occasions and centres around various forms of social activities. For example, in the land tenure system, where access to land may be secured through borrowing, one turns to kinsfolk rather than an unrelated neighbour. In the majority of Nuba communities mutual obligations between family groups entail that economic

transactions, in the strict sense, are avoided (Nadel,1947; Baumann, 1987). Furthermore, some anthropologists, such as Baumann and Nadel, have observed that clan cohesion exists not only to bind specific individual households, but also tends to strengthen responsibilities to the village community at large (Baumann, 1984:43). Thus Nadel adopts the terminology 'symbiotic clan structure', to refer to -

> "a form of social segmentation (more specially clan-structure) in which every section, as a section, assumes certain specific duties (religious or political) on behalf of the community at large" (Nadel, 1947:9).

Such cooperation was made extensive use of in connection with agriculture, both in the near past and also to a lesser degree, in the present-day now that forces of the money economy tend to prompt the migration of family members (see chapter 6). Mutual cooperation between close kin is, of course, a phenomenon common throughout African, Asian and Latin American societies. Baric, meanwhile, observed among Yugoslavs that solidarity and identity of the family is so central that this solidarity centred on property (Baric, 1967:266). In such a society, almost all family members find support from the land held in common and for this reason land continues to be inalienable property. However, Baric posits that due to migration of some of the family members to towns, the maintenance of land, as opposed to expanding it or investing in it to increase productivity is the dominant practice. Baric considers

this as one of the sociological factors impeding expansion and investment in traditional agriculture (see Baric,1967).

One of the likely impacts of the introduction of the Habila scheme is its effect on the familial social order, relating to difficulties which will be encountered in respect of new rules of social interaction. The Nuba peasants are mainly concerned with the continuity of familial ties as these are assumed to be the proper means of social security and group solidarity. Therefore, in face of the scheme, kinship came to be stressed because such values constitute a guard against a possibly hostile environment, and also because, for cultural reasons, the existence of an individual was still thought to be without meaning if not embedded in a kinship network. Colson noted among the Gwembe Tonga that as a result of the implementation of a resettlement scheme the villagers clung to family associations (Colson, 1971). In the context of the Habila scheme the villagers' clinging to kinship relationship is reinforced by the peasants' lack of faith in the scheme's administrators who fail to provide for effective grass-roots participation. Their hostility to the state is reflected in the resistence which they voiced in respect of the construction of the scheme: "they have strong legal case against both the state and the capitalist owners of the scheme" (Kersany, 1983:38). The Habila land (from the point of view of the Nuba peasants), though unused, arguably belongs to the indigenous population. Firstly, as the Nuba peasants find it irrational to get involved in the cooperatives, thanks to the previous

bad experience with traditional forms of cooperation, they remained isolated from active participation in the scheme (I shall discuss this at length in chapter 6). Secondly, no concrete benefits in terms of social services were provided on the part of the state to help local people cope with the new situation. Such a state of affairs has been described by Kersany as follows -

> "There were only two dispensaries in the area, one at Habila and the other at Tukma, both staffed by non-trained Farash. Medicines were very scarce. Apart from a very small quantity of penicillin, none were available at Habila dispensary... Even where present, medical facilities were beyond the reach of most of the population, given the inadequacy of transport facilities between the different villages... Even the single school offered very irregular services, being forced periodically to close because of shortage of food supplies. It is almost beyond imagination to see pupils starving while their own district produces thousands of tons of grains every year" (1983:42).

Assistance under such circumstances could only be secured through acts which might be validated by existing norms and values. Islamic conventional teachings provide such validation. Islam encourages mutual help between close kin, especially at times of need. Resort on the part of the Nuba peasants to kinship association is appropriate in that the family, traditionally, was the basic unit for providing subsistence needs for its members. Moreover,

under economic pressure, the development in this social group of a feeling of 'belonging together' means the enhancement of the family as an intact social unit.

In most of the traditional societies in Sudan, land remains inalienable because the family head considers it the property of the ancestors and therefore to be retained and passed down to the next generation. Today, due to kinship solidarity, most of the households located in the project area assured their livelihood from family cultivation of the bildat (family farm) plus wage labour in the scheme. It has been estimated that in 1978, irrespective of the composition of the family (eg sex ratios) a full 82.1 per cent of the traditional agricultural operations was carrried out by family members (Kersany, 1983:41). The contribution of the young children to family security was widely recognised by the actors themselves who remarked that "the existence of mechanised farms near their villages has obliged them to keep children away from school in order to prevent their animals from straying into the farms and attract fines" (Affan, 1978:27). Where some of the family members are divorced from home by getting work abroad, the migrants' contribution to the family continues in the form of remittances (Kersany, 1983).

Such kinship association, together with cultural considerations which require the maintenance of land for generations, provide some of the reasons for the peasant's lack of emphasis on the 'economics' of farming. It even con-

strains development efforts aimed at emphasising institution building and the organisation of traditional people into forms of modern cooperative. This conflict between cooperation at the level of the family and that at the macro-level (eg cooperatives) is repeatedly emphasised in the literature on rural development. Thus Weintraub and Margulies state that -

> "traditional family orientations which can perhaps support and advance a smallholding in conditions of limited capitalisation, initial mechanisation, and partial or protected market integration, will be a liability in more intensive production and greater commercialisation. Similarly, kinship relations which can sustain traditional or quasi-traditional cooperation will not be capable of making a fully-fledged modern cooperative work" (Weintraub and Margulies, 1986:48).

The difficulty of transforming cooperation at the family level into a fully-fledged cooperative institution arises mainly due to failure to reconcile (the often divergent) kinship values and cooperative values (see Dore, 1971).

Labour Migration

The combination of self-employment in the family farm with seasonal employment is commonly cited in respect of peasant societies experiencing some sort of socio-economic change (Hunt, 1966; Baric, 1967; Yudelman, 1964). From an economic point of view, labour migration to towns for work in the

wage economy in the context of some of the family members remaining in the subsistence sector can be shown to be quite a rational decision. It has been argued that a host of factors combine to make seasonal migration a necessary option. Yudelman (1964) states that cash incomes in traditional agriculture are low; yet along with the security provided through kin groups traditional land farming at least enables households to maintain themselves at low cost by producing subsistence crops. In addition, in the wage economy average monetary returns to labour are so low that they could not support a whole family. In these circumstances a combination of occupations is ideally necessary (1964:131).

Despite the advantages brought by occupational mobility its overall effect on peasant farming is to retard investment and consequently agricultural expansion (Baric, 1967; Yudelman, 1964). This trend is widespread throughout African subsistence agricultural societies. It has been argued that in traditional agriculture there exists surplus labour, to the extent that labour can be withdrawn without reducing productivity. However, the adverse effects of seasonal labour migration on subsistence agriculture imply that this claim finds no empirical verification. Thus Yudelman states that -

> "On the whole, however, the periodic and sustained absence of the most productive elements in the labour force must retard agricultural development. Although there is under-employment in African agriculture, it

> is not necessarily the size of the labour force that is of overriding imortance in considering the relation among land, labour and capital in peasant agriculture. The composition and quality of the labour force is as important as its size" (1964:133-134).

But, all in all, such reduction of revenue in subsistence agriculture is offset by income from wage employment. Seasonal employment is likely to continue for it leads to family incomes more substantial than would be the case without wage employment. The implication of this for policy-making is that if the rural labour force is to be stabilised and to be made to commit itself to agricultural development then the levels of monetary income available in the subsistence sector should be raised to levels equivalent to that of combining self-employment with wage employment (see also Yudelman, 1964). However, this solution is impractical for two reasons (as applied to the Habila scheme). First capitalist farmers in the scheme cannot rationally raise the level of wages over and above a certain optimal level (the level where the marginal productivity of labour equals the average wage rate). Any increase in the wage rate above this level would entail a loss for the capitalist farmer. Secondly, by increasing the wage rate the amount of labour supply in the scheme rises spectacurly since this lucrative wage attracts more labour. The resulting surplus labour in turn works to dampen the level of wage rate (Lewis, 1954). As we shall see, the Nuba peasants make use of the lucrative employment in the scheme which in turn retards peasant agriculture.

Social mobility in the Nuba Mountains region is the hallmark of younger adults. Historically, mobility and seasonal migration were necessitated by the population being increasingly exposed to the demands of modern life. In the early days of the introduction of the money economy the immediate response of the Nuba farming population was the migration of the younger adults to neighbouring regions to procure for themselves and their families the means of livelihood. Nadel (1947:511) noted that the migrant adults were engaged as soldiers and labourers; and brought with them habits, interests and desires from distant places. Due to the persistence of this migration land is left to be cultivated by the elders, wives and children. The point to be established, however, is that the migrant groups do not sever their linkage with their families and the home village.

The most mobile people among the Nuba farmers happened to be the villagers from Dilling, Nyma, Heiban and Tabak. In addition to the material reward of migration there were psychological incentives "to wander about and see the world, or to live the attractive life of soldiers or police, who seem to have everything one can desire" (1947:77). With the introduction of the Habila scheme the peasants have now come to desire what they can see in the hands of capitalist farmers and the scheme administrators, even though, as we have noted, they have been reluctant to participate in certain aspects of the scheme (viz cooperatives).

The Habila scheme has certainly contributed to the national economy in terms of increased food supply (dura and sesame), but, ironically, due to exporting these crops outside the region the local communities are far from being self-sufficient (see Kersany, 1983). Having voiced their resistence to cooperative schemes the different households have to seek extra sources of employment for their viability. Land, for cultural reasons cannot be abandoned, lest the whole family fall into ruins.

To provide for the extra needs which the introduction of the scheme inspired, individuals drew on past experiences so as to cope strategically with the new situation. Migration from the Nuba Mountains province to other regional centres took phenomenal dimensions (Baumann, 1987). The reasons for such migration have included the feeling of relative deprivation in the scheme area; coupled with the emerging consumerist ideology. One measure of the relative deprivation is the lack of welfare services which neither the private capitalist farmers, nor the state is willing to provide. To see the magnitude of labour migration the following table is presented (which shows the effect which labour migration had on the age and sex composition of the population).

Table 7
Population of South Kordofan Province and Southern Jebels District (percentage) as shown in the Sudan National Census of 1973

	Age Under 15 both sexes	15 - 29		30 - 44		45 - 59		over 60	
		m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f
South Kordofan Province	46.3	8.4	12.4	8.0	8.3	5.0	4.9	2.5	2.7
Southern Jebels	45.7	7.6	13.0	7.7	9.7	5.3	6.0	2.0	2.8

Source: Baumann (1987), p34.

The overall effect of labour migration on the local economy is its restriction of agricultural expansion. The potential family labour actually engaged in cultivating the family farm during the agricultural season is considerably reduced. This explains to us, from the sociological point of view, the reasons for the low agricultural productivity and investment in peasant bildat. There is yet another possibility, or strategy, which the Nuba peasant adopts to cope with the new demands. The fact that the scheme provides extra employment opportunity for the local population encouraged the peasants to hire out their labour in seasonal employment. Here the best strategy for the individual peasant to adopt is to combine bildat cultivation and wage work in the scheme. Table 8 shows the contribution to the peasant from combining bildat and seasonal employment in the schemes.

Table 8
Household Income from Bildat Cultivation and Seasonal Employment in the Habila Schemes (1975/76)

Mode of Activity	Household income in LS mms	Aggregate Mandays	Av. prod'n Av. wages/ Mandays in LS mms
Seasonal employment	64.530	155	0.416
Bildat	61.590	329	0.187
Both	126.120	484	

Source: Affan (1978), 33.

The table makes it clear that a peasant's income from combining bildat cultivation and seasonal employment far exceeds the income he would derive from the exclusive cultivation of bildat. Through this combination a peasant gets a double benefit. Firstly, his bildat becomes the focus of family relations and security. Secondly, he enjoys the material benefits of gainful employment in the scheme (cf Baric, 1967). As Baric generally described such a situation in peasant agriculture tends to have implications in that "the necessity of modernising [peasant] agricultural methods and of investing for greater productivity does not seem to households to be very pressing" (Baric, 1967:271).

This exposition has far reaching theoretical implications. It refutes and reduces to absurdity the Neo-Marxists' argumentation for the persistence of petty-commodity production as the necessary outcome of capitalism's domination and exploitation of non-capitalist modes of production.

Analysis from the perspective of articulation-of-modes blurs us from recognising the real incentives and motives which guide the actor's behaviour and meaningful actions (cf, Meillassoux, 1975). What appears to the individual peasant (as an actor) is the pre-existing possibilities which he purports to exploit from the niche he is occupying. Though engaging in petty farming, not only is the peasant receiving material rewards, but also, as we have demonstrated, ensuring social support and security for the whole family. Contrary to what articulation theorists may argue, if we are to account for low productivity and investment in traditional agriculture then it is essential that we view it in terms of what we now call the social variables associated with investment in traditional agriculture and the specific circumstances under which that investment takes place (see eg Baric, 1967).

The behaviour of migrants and their motivations allows us to come to grips with the individual's efforts to strike a balance between what traditional life on the one hand, and modern life, on the other, may provide. Thus, O'Brien quotes Mitchell who states, with respect to labour migration, that -

> "The circulary migration of men here may be seen as a device to maintain and preserve the unity of the family where they cannot achieve this because of the paucity of local economic resources. The circulation of migrants between town and country in terms of this argument stems from the separation of places where the

rules and disciplines. The obligations and values of the new type of society differ from those of the traditional community and may conflict with them. The fact that most of the migrants are unskilled implies that the new jobs open to them in towns are the ones which are less remunerative and most labour demanding. For example, apart from the few who may be working in factories or as soldiers a large number of Nuba migrants in Khartoum are to be seen working in construction. The system of social security attached to such a job is unsatisfactory. This means that such migrants rely on family and community, through whom security is established via the norms and moral values of the traditional society (Baumann, 1987). As regards access to traditional land and farms, which materially provides basic security, a person's physical presence is essential: a person's failure to be available to the village community from time to time may imply that his land reverted to the community. Physical presence, then, legally entitles the returning migrant to his land rights as perceived by the community (Baumann, 1987).

There are yet other sociological reasons for the persistence of this circulary migration. One point relates to the recognition of authority in African societies in general. Hunter (1962) argues that in most societies in tropical Africa authority is recognised in age, traditional office and in high lineage strata. This differs from authority in the urban sector which depends on experience and technical skill. The Nuba migrants in the urban centres lack these

latter attributes and feel alienated. A labour migrant's bond with the traditional community thus comes to be reinforced since these bonds take on moral connotations. Baumann has demonstrated in respect of the labour migrants of Miri, a tendency for experiences of independence and freedom to stimulate a feeling for change, while at the same time the individual complies with community morals (1987:192). The community's appreciation of the migrant's contribution to his home village in the form of new goods, presents or gifts to relatives provides an extra stimulus to keep those home ties: by and large, people return because they like to be admired, ie for prestige. On the other hand local villagers have recognised the importance of migration to urban towns since such migration brings new ideas and broadens knowledge (via exposure to the mass media, etc) which can be used to solve conflicts and problems in the tribal society. It is argued that despite the fact that the Nuba depend on elders for the settlement of minor disputes in the household or between different families, labour migrants have become actively involved in such mediation (1987:203).

Another point concerning morality is that labour migrants in the urban centres who can succeed in establishing houses there would be in a position to receive kin who were newly migrating but who were faced with accommodation problems. By and large, labour migrants are considered as assets to the village community. Most importantly labour migrants from the Nuba Mountains have been observed to show a

concern for developing the local infrastructure of their villages, for the presence of the Habila scheme awakened the inhabitants to new values even though it did not positively contribute to rural development. Baumann states that -

> "If a labour migrant invests in a village mill or shop, but is credited for serving the traditional self-reliance of his home community, such trust encourages his better motives and promises gratification beyond financial interests" (1987:192).

This concern for village development coupled with moral gratification makes labour migration a self-regulatory process. But it amounts to an investment in the local infrastructure and not in traditional agriculture. The burden of producing for household consumption is then shifted to women. But given that everyone appreciates the migrants' contribution to the village community, "the wife of an absent labour migrant obliged to cultivate her own Far Farm is more likely to cope with her personal and economic plight when coping enhances her moral standing as a farmer growing her own crops" (1987:192).

There are also both push and pull factors of rural-urban migration which are not economic. On the one hand, life in the village community for a migrant who is accustomed to the urban way of life seems relatively harsh; but spending one's holidays in the community among one's kin and friends strengthens the migrant's bonds with them (1987: 197). The

fact that these holidays tend to be arranged to coincide with the community's celebrations and festivities testifies to the high values attached to the local culture. And customs concomitant to village morality are both appreciated and governed by strict rules and obligations. "Being times of celebration, music, and dance, seasonal festivals allow for a reaffirmation of affective bonds that would be more difficult to experience in workaday reality" (1987: 203). This persistent labour flow from towns to the home community and the concomitant clinging to communal obligation implies that the assimilation of Nuba migrants or their enculturation into the urban way of life is an incomplete process.

On the push side of labour migration, commitment to the community's ideology of self-reliance necessitates taking recourse to urban cities which promise better employment opportunities and income. Labour migrants are basically concerned with what they can bring back to their villages from towns rather than blindly calculating the opportunity cost of labour migration in terms of output forgone in traditional agriculture. But even when such urban employment is highly remunerated, the way such migrants spend their income does not encourage saving. The bulk of this income, as we have seen is dissipated in the form of prestations to friends and kinsfolk. The other part goes to investment on local infrastructures. Low investment in traditional agriculture in the Nuba Mountains is partly attributed, sociologically speaking, to labour migration.

The impact of labour migration on the peasant economy can be read from Baumann's sweeping generalisation -

> "The depopulation caused by labour migration is a severe threat to the agricultural subsistence of numerous Nuba communities in all parts of the Mountains" (1987:74).

Conspicuous Consumption and the Ideology of Consumerism: their effect on Investment in Peasant Farming

Conspicuous expenditure and the ideology of consumerism have characterised the Nuba society at two distinct but interrelated phases of development. The first relates to the pre-scheme phase; the second to the post-scheme phases. It is possible to detect a process of historical development behind this phenomenon as it is observed today. We have alluded to the harvest celebrations in chapter 3. It has been argued that maximum crop cultivation was, in the near past, accompanied by what was locally called the orinyate celebration, translated by Nadel as "celebrating the filling to the brim of a granary" (1947:49). Pride in the display of wealth was universal throughout the Nuba Mountains area. The amount of yield generated from the farm would become known to the community before it was moved home for consumption and storage. In the harvesting season the farmer, his wife or wives and their children would set to harvest the family farm. The cutting of the crop was usually done by the father and his wife while the younger children would collect the yield. "The heaped up grain stacks on which the grain is left to dry are visible

to every one, besides a lucky harvest is soon revealed by the farmer himself" (Nadel, 1947:49). In an orinyate celebration the head of the household is assumed to serve beer, porridge and meat which is lavishly consumed by the participants. Despite the fact that this social elaboration provided a strong economic incentive to individual enterprise, it is argued that "the restricted system of storage precludes in most tribes the distribution of produce over several years" (1947:49) since the surplus product of one year cannot be used to balance the deficit in the following year. Thus, traditionally, the orinyate and storage inadequacy were the main factors which acted to restrict the accumulation of wealth and consequently agricultural development. The tendency of the Nuba farmers to opt for lavish consumption was overtly expressed by the actors themselves as Nadel indicated that "public opinion even demands that the surplus of a successful year should be converted into immediate liberal expenditure". The magnitude of this tendency is such that it -

> "renders the food economy of the tribe most vulnerable. It prevents any effective insurance against the perennial risks of locusts, droughts, or failures of the crops. It is not surprising, then, that famines visit the Nuba hills with sinister regularity" (1947:50).

During the years when this form of crop failure occurred, the farmers respond by planting more cash crop (sesame) for exchange against grain should the next season's harvest

prove a failure as well. This implies that sesame contributed to the household viability merely in terms of the amount of grain it was exchanged for; rather than contributing directly to domestic consumption or to capital accumulation.

The post-colonial phase did not witness any significant change in the infrastructural base of the Nuba Mountains region, apart from a few improvements in road building and health facilities (see Kersany, 1983). Other significant changes were the development of trade, market exchange and the rapid monetization of the economy. With the introduction of the Habila scheme the ideology of conspicuous expenditure has been supplanted by an ideology of consumerism. Two factors are responsible for the development of this consumerist ideology. The first relates to the local people's 'emulation' of luxurious consumption which is now exhibited on the part of private owners of the scheme. The other, as we shall see, relates to the uncertainty under which the Nuba peasants undertake their transactions.

State farms, cooperatives and private schemes work under flexible laws of supply and demand which directly impinge on peasant production and consumption decisions. In the Habila scheme area it has been found that under certain favourable economic conditions the rich farmers opt to market agricultural output within the confines of the Southern Kordofan region thereby maximizing returns to capital. However, under seemingly less propitious economic

conditions rich farmers resort to smuggling and divert the distribution of output to the neighbouring province, thereby attracting sizeable revenues. "So, for example, merchants in Habila may sell their dura in Wau or elsewhere in the Southern region where prices can be higher than in Kordofan" (Shepherd, 1983:309).

These changing rich men's strategies affect the ordinary peasant since he is subjected to work under constantly changing economic opportunities implied by the laws of supply and demand: the peasant producer can no longer be certain about market prices for his crops. This distorted structure of the economy is accentuated by the state's intervention to fix crop prices immediately after the harvesting of the agricultural produce (the Mechanised Farming Corporation assumes the task of fixing crop prices and marketing state farm's output). In the private schemes, on the other hand, such operations are carried out independently of the Mechanised Farming Corporation. These fluctuations in market prices trigger off response on the part of the peasants. It becomes rational for them to weigh consumption over investment. This is also partly attributed to the peasant's inability to withstand private scheme owner's competition with respect to labour and other agricultural inputs.

The institutionalisation of the shail (ie mortgaging farm produce for cash payment prior to harvesting) in the scheme area is a clear manifestation of the development of

consumerist ideology. Due to the absence of credit institutions which can provide financial assistance to the Nuba peasants, the peasants have found it prudent to exploit the advantageous social relationship established with local villagers (eg traders and shopkeepers). Both Affan (1978) and Kersnay (1983) have documented the prevalence of shail in the scheme area. However, Kersany remarks that this form of moneylending accounts for the development of usury capital, the principal beneficiary of which is the capitalist. The writer goes further and warns planners against the development of the shail, and considers this warning as -

> "central to the recommendation for the creation of efficient credit institutions which might alleviate and remove altogether the possibility of the development of this most notorious and exploitative institution" (Kersany, 1983:44).

Against this I would argue that a peasant's decision to mortgage his crop in shail dealings is guided by a concern to provide for present consumption rather than uncertain future consumption. The money secured via the act of shailing is eventually converted into consumption expenditure at the expense of modernising traditional agriculture. However, the benefits from this consumption behaviour to the individual peasant should not be underestimated. Given the fact that possible advantageous economic opportunities are entirely absent (due to rapid

economic change as well as the absence of welfare services), the peasant's rational decision lies with 'perceived' other possible advantages, viz, to consume rather than to invest in agriculture.

This analysis refutes Marxist students who argue that the shail system is a necessary mechanism for peasant exploitation on the part of rich farmers. Considerations of the relations of peasants with non-peasants in the light of exploitation will not help us understand this social aspect of peasant socio-economic behaviour. This holds true insofar as the individual actor is concerned. The point to be established is that considerations of individual motivation under the specific circumstances surrounding and influencing such behaviour should be given primacy over materialistic emphasis. Low investment in traditional agriculture should, therefore, be explained in this light. We have provided a sweeping critique in chapter 1 arguing that under certain circumstances examining the relations peasants have with non-peasants in terms of exploitation is theoretically dangerous. In this connection those who argue against the development of the shail system base their argument on the often unfounded assumption that the price at which peasants mortgage their crops to money-lenders are so low that such prices do not cover the costs of production. The discussion is almost always directed at calculating the allegedly high rates of profit which accrue to the money-lender when selling the crops secured through the shail dealing. It should be recognised that the

transactions a peasant makes with a money-lender take place in a totally different environment from those made between the moneylender and others at the post-harvest period. Secondly, the peasant when shailing his crop is not entering into his calculations the values which would accrue to the money-lender upon selling the mortgaged crop since he is not part of this transaction, nor is he directly affected by it. What usually happens is that the money-lender takes the crop immediately after harvesting and markets it away from the farm gate.

Two other facts can be well established which show the incomplete images students of exploitation hold about peasants. It is almost universally accepted that peasants are considerably restricted from marketing their crops in towns due to transportation difficulties. In the case of the Nuba peasantry it is a common fact that during the harvesting season and prior to the sale of crops the amount of money at the peasant's disposal is considerably limited. This means that marketing the crop at the farm gate saves him the cost of transportation which he cannot afford to pay. One thing which exploitation students ignore, or fail to appreciate, is the value of the services the money-lenders provide for the peasant - a failure which basically stems from the onesidedness through which exploitation is analysed. Thus, Hunt quotes Caint who warns community development agencies against interfering with and eliminating Chinese middlemen -

> "If Community Development agencies view the situation simply as indicating a need to eliminate the Chinese middleman they are apt to be disappointed in the results of their efforts. It is not always possible to make a realistic estimate of the value of the middleman's activities and sometimes there is a tendency to forget that these often include hauling the crop and providing credit - both of which are expensive services. There is also the matter of risk-taking since the assumption that prices will rise after the harvest is not always borne out" [my emphasis] (in Hunt, 1966:175).

The peasants' awareness of these practical difficulties involved in production and marketing prompts them to actively engage in shail transactions. The implications of this for rural development programmes and the Habila scheme itself, insofar as it intends to attract future participation of the Nuba peasants, is that if scheme administration is to eliminate shail merchants by actively addressing these problems, then it should provide "a rather considerable government subsidy to meet costs which are now represented in the middleman's interest charges" (1966:176). Hunt goes on to make it plain that middlemen are often the target of criticism despite the sound training and experience which makes them competent in this field. Furthermore, the middleman's services are unrecognised and he is often taken as a scape-goat for the simple fact that too often the middleman is of a different ethnic

stock (1966:176). The fact that the Jellaba merchants in the Nuba Mountains area come from the Northern provinces makes them the target of the same criticism.

The other fact which exploitation theorists fail to fully grasp is associated with the unique way peasants evaluate their transactions. It is well proved that even the selling of the crop below the price of production appears to the peasant as gainful since he can obtain in its place something which is useful (O'Brien, 1977:47). Ironically, we can adduce evidence even from within Marxist discourse which testifies to the above argument and therefore amounts to a critique of the latter. Thus O'Brien quotes Marx who states for peasants that -

> "For peasant owning a parcel, the limit of exploitation is not set by the average profit of capital, insofar as he is a small capitalist... The absolute limit for him as a small capitalist is no more than the wages he pays himself after deducting his actual costs. So long as the price of the product covers those wages, he will cultivate his land, and often at wages down to a physical minimum. It is not necessary, therefore, that the market price, rises, either up to the value or the price of his product. This is one of the reasons why grain prices are lower in countries with predominant small peasant proprietorship than in countries with a capitalist mode of production" [my emphasis] (in O'Brien, 1977:47).

Thus from the point of view of the actor (ie peasant) market price changes are not necessarily the factors which prompt him to undertake transaction dealings through the shail. Exploitation students should, then, appreciate the fact that the returns a peasant draws from shailing his crop are based on the calculations, described in Marx's words (in this case Marx seems to be adopting an actor-centred view) which set the prices of production at an imperceptibly low level. Under these circumstances exploitation becomes a complete over-simplification of the facts. The importance of shail remains as long as this practice ensures the peasant his means of subsistence. Again, from within Marxist discourse we hold that in peasant farming "outputs are sold as a function of subsistence" (Banaji, in O'Brien, 1977:47). This tendency to weigh consumption over profit maximisation and accumulation and which is further reinforced by what we have called a consumerist ideology makes peasant farming survive even at a very low level of investment.

CHAPTER 6

Nafeir as a Form of Traditional Cooperation

One aspect of the Habila scheme that has continued to receive enormous attention on the part of planners and Sudanese professionals is the creation of agricultural cooperatives. For the purpose of attracting participants to the scheme the state farms were instituted to demonstrate the benefits of the scheme to small farmers. Cooperative institutions are greatly emphasised (both for development in general and for development in Kordofan in particular), for the following reasons:

1. The regional government's capacity to offer social services in the form of credit for individual farmers is considerably limited. This is attributable to the limited resource base of the whole region and the meagre regional budget at the disposal of the regional administration.

2. The attempt to raise agricultural production by undertaking agricultural operations on an individualistic basis has failed, but, also, even when production is increased, benefits tend to accrue to a minority of scheme owners.

3. The ineffective manner in which production is traditionally organised and the small size of farm which traditional farmers put into cultivation, could be reversed by launching organisational forms based on cooperativism.

4. Rural-urban migration should be curbed. By virtue of their disciplinary nature, cooperatives function to stabilise members in the region.

5. More importantly, the Nuba farmers have traditionally displayed concern for developing communalistic institutions through the formation of self-help groups (the nafeir).

6. Cooperatives, in general, have the advantages of offering training at the village level (eg training in management and commercial skill), and of establishing 'secondary powers' - to use Hunter's terminology - which means "authentic organisations of the community as against the state" (Hunter, 1962:115).

Partly for the above-mentioned reasons Sudanese scholars like Omer (1982) have repeatedly recommended cooperatives as a blueprint for transforming traditional agriculture in the Kordofan region. In a paper presented to the Kadugli Conference for the Development of the Kordofan region, held in October 1980, Omer suggested the creation of production, credit and marketing cooperatives to spearhead rural development in Southern Kordofan province. He believed that backed by a sustained government involvement such an undertaking would lead to greater efficiency and to the raising of personal income per capita. Complementary to this, a reduction of peasant dependence on traditional credit institutions would be achieved. In turn, the small farmers would be in a position to devote more of their cash

revenue to saving, with the consequence of greater prospects for investment in agriculture. The cummulative effect would be, according to Omer, "to reduce the possibility of tax burden on farmers, and [in general] would create a favourable atmosphere which would otherwise be difficult to bring about" (Omer, 1982:21). However, Omer seems to be aware of the potential constraints which are obviously likely to arise when projects imposed from outside and instigated without due attention given to local circumstances. The form of cooperatives he recommends reflects the thinking of the 'improvement approach' -

> "The sort of cooperatives suggested must first and foremost be organisations that are closely associated with indigenous socio-cultural factors, that largely avoid the application of unquestioned 'imposed' models, and that reduce the impositions of institutions on the people" (1982:21).

Ironically, and despite the seemingly sound recommendations which scholars whole-heartedly offer in favour of cooperatives, empirical investigation has shown that, in the context of the Habila scheme, cooperative institutions among all institutionalised forms of developing traditional agriculture, have commanded little interest. Affan, for instance, in his research on Habila scheme explicitly reveals the Nuba peasants disillusionment with cooperatives - a phenomenon which, he contends, finds no readily available explanation. In previous chapters I have elaborated some of the economic factors pertaining to this, and have

introduced some socio-cultural and strategic factors in terms of which we might begin an explanation. In this chapter we investigate the key 'social factors' which scholars believe facilitate peasants' acceptance of co-operativism - the existence of traditional forms of cooperation (nafeir). We investigate the subjective conditions that gave rise to such traditional forms of cooperation; we look at how these forms functioned, and at the reasons for their gradual disintegration. It is my contention that the assumption that the traditional forms could be a foundation for agricultural cooperatives is painfully erroneous. Not only have the traditional cooperative systems ceased to exist in their traditional forms but, due to the persistence of the very conditions which have led to their disintegration, they can no longer provide a sound basis for modern cooperative institutions.

The dissolution of traditional institutions of cooperation is, of course, commonly described in anthropology in respect of the ravages of commercialism on peasant society (Faris, 1987; Holy, 1987). (Also some anthropologists, like Abdullahi (1987) argue that traditional cooperative institutions have certain socio-cultural values which perpetulate them.) The culmination is, perhaps, the individualism which Foster (1965) describes in his paper on 'the image of limited good'. Thus the reports on the individualism that has developed in Nuba socio-economic structure and which seems to stand in opposition to a successful implementation of cooperatives, finds its

counterpart in many other countries. A common trend which accompanies the commercialism of peasant agriculture and which is repeatedly cited in the literature on peasantry has been "the growth of a new stratum of worker-peasants, who supplement their agricultural, mainly subsistence, production by hiring out their labour" (Shanin, 1971:250). Prior to the full commercialistion of agriculture and the development of wage labour communal work groups were the only means of attracting labour as a supplement to family labour. Such recruitment of labour is usually governed by rates of reciprocity and is based on ties of kinship and neighbourhood. Tasks for which group labour might be recruited include digging of wells, house construction, land clearing, weeding, etc. As an incentive to participants, beer and sometimes meat may be served upon the conclusion of the particular task. It has been argued that communal labour groups do not increase the total labour supply; but, in practice people are committed to work for longer hours than when they work individually (de Wilde, 1967:86). Certainly, communal labour is usually recruited for the most labour-demanding tasks such as weeding and well digging.

One factor concomitant with commercialism, and which influences peasant production and the mode of labour organisation, is competition from mechanised farming schemes. Given the fact that peasants and rich scheme owners compete for the scarce agricultural inputs and factors of production the ultimate result is for the small

farm to disintegrate. This is mainly because rich farmers can solicit wage labour which would otherwise be summoned by peasants on the farm work parties. Furthermore, rich farmers can easily divert family labour from traditional agriculture and transform it into 'peasant' wage workers, thereby affecting the spontaneous forms of labour mobilization. The development of commercialism and the accompanying growth of peasant-worker stratum in turn works to further precipitate small farm disintegration. As peasants are transformed into worker-peasants, it too often happens that these peasant-workers, especially able-bodied men flee to cities which promise better paid jobs and security. The family production unit left behind thus finds its capacity to mobilise labour increasingly reduced.

A wide range of studies on African agricultural systems have emerged which stress the dissolution of communal labour forms. Hunter (1962), for instance, remarks that Nadel in 1936 noted a trend towards the rapid weakening of the efako cultivation (based on communal labour) among the Nupe of Nigeria, with much the same trend occurring for the Hausa gayya. The main blow to communal labour forms came from competition between cultivators due to the spread of the cash economy (Hunter, 1962:111). The effect of the cash economy on the pre-existing socio-economic structure of traditional societies is also to further social inequality. De Schlippe, in his study of the beer party among the Zande of the southern Sudan, argues that communal labour tends to maintain the inegalitarian relationship

between the social groups. The Zande family which can succeed in appropriating massive quantitites of cereal by mobilising beer parties will find itself in a position to acquire the bulk of the surplus since the family can capitalise on the initial surplus for further mobilisation (de Schlippe, 1956:148). One of the uses made of the surplus food generated through labour mobilisation is the fulfilment of social obligations. Other uses, as described by Allan (1965) include gifts for prestige, and generosity and for honouring important people. Allan cites Lynn's material from Mamprusi of Northern Ghana, that in this society the surplus in a good year was "used lavishly in religious ceremonies; so lavishly, it seems, that some enthusiasts found themselves short of seed by the start of the next season" (Allan, 1965:45). This lavish expenditure would severely affect poor farmers, in contrast to rich ones, since small farmers usually put into cultivation too small an acreage to yield a large surplus.

However, rich farmers also make use of surplus products to further their mercantile interests and personal advancements. Where these farmers use part of the surplus in the form of prestige, it too often happens that it is used to honour important people such as officials, administrators, police and the like. This tendency to draw surplus via communal labour and to divert the surplus away from the original contributors or use it for recruiting wage labour, tends to widen the social distance between rich farmers and poor peasants. In turn, this would lead to the gradual

dissolution of communal labour itself as a basic form of labour organisation. Thus, for the poor peasant the rich farmers represent the spectre of an outmoded exploitative strata whose aim is to manipulate their effort and infringe the rules of reciprocity. When state-designed plans are imposed, and which claim to be modelled on traditional cooperative patterns, such previous experience would ultimately be invoked and so thwart development efforts.

Communal Labour in the Southern Kordofan Region

Communal labour, nafeir, as an institution, took its shape in the context of traditional subsistence agriculture and continued to exist in relation to its contribution to the objective of subsistence production. Historically, land in the Nuba Mountains was plentiful and, as a consequence, the population enjoyed easy access to it. The bulk of the usable land remained in what was described by anthropologists as no-man's-land (see eg Nadel, 1947). The main problem was one of shortage of labour during the peak agricultural season. When family labour failed to effectively undertake the agricultural operations, extra labour had to be mobilised from kin, age-mates, neighbours and occasionally guests (Nadel, 1947:54). Both sexes were entitled to recruit such group labour provided that the rules of reciprocity were not jeopardised. The organiser of a nafeir paid no financial rewards to the participants, rather he might serve beer (brewed by the women), tea, coffee and meat to entertain the guests. Recruitment was not supposed to exceed the length of one day at a time,

though a person may organise group labour several times during the agricultural season. The frequency with which a nafeir could be organised depended on the recruiter's ability to finance the enterprise and could therefore vary according to one's wealth and status (1947:54).

In the early times of Nuba settlement in the Southern Kordofan region (upon migration from the northern part of Sudan some hundreds of years ago), their life was described as revolving around inter-tribal wars and communal raids. The Nuba were known for their traditional anarchism and rebellion; and it would, therefore, not be a mistake to trace the rise of communal labour to those early days. Communal raids were concluded by the collective share of spoils among the raiders. It could also make sense to argue that this military mentality encouraged a propensity to cooperate in agriculture, or, generally, in economic spheres (see Manger, 1987). The colonial administration played a big role in the pacification of the area in the 1920's and eventually the practice, ie communal labour, was fully developed and incorporated in the sphere of production in the Nuba economy. According to one source (Manger, 1987), the incorporation of the specific communal labour institutions into the Nuba socio-economic system has been the result of culture contact between the Nuba populations and the immigrants and the neighbouring Arabs. The Arabs, it is argued, by virtue of their commitment to Islam were able to precede other non-Muslim tribes in developing a feeling of cooperativeness among the members of the wider

community. The neighbouring communities who are supposed to have been in contact with the Nuba for centuries were the Baggara Arabs. The latter are pastoral nomadic groups whose grazing routes bring them within the confines of the Nuba Mountains territory. The institution of ceremonial drinking of tea is the typical form of joint labour among the Baggara Arabs; which is followed by elaborate singing and praising rites. According to Manger (1987) this institution has been borrowed by the Nuba communities with some modification to suit their conditions. He quotes Arber who states that -

> "... the Awlad Himeid who came north to Habania country in the rains picked it up [ie the institution of communal labour] and took it south where it caught on among serf-like communities of the Southern Kawahla at Errio, at Werne and at El Liri" (in Manger, 1987:97).

However, such alleged borrowing of the nafeir institution can only be proved by tracing it back to the early times of the Nuba settlement in the region since no ethnographic research has empirically established the absence of communal labour among the Nuba prior to their cultural contact with the Arabs. Moreover, a number of studies have been made which clearly establish the indigenous practice of communal labour among non-Arab societies, among them societies which had no contact with the Arabs at all (eg Worsley, 1971).

Use has been made of the nafeir in nearly three spheres of production and exchange in the Nuba Mountains region (the following description applies to the recent past; as we shall see, the nafeir no longer fully functions today). It was extensively practiced for accomplishing the various agricultural tasks (eg planting, land clearing, digging, weeding, sowing, winnowing, harvesting and hunting). Secondly, it was used in the non-agricultural sphere such as hut construction, the digging of wells and repair of beds. Finally, it was extended to account for part of the bride-price in respect of the future husband's participation in his in-laws' agricultural operations; this sort of bride-price effectively amounts to bride-service. The dominant parties around whom communal labour revolves include close kin, neighbours and in-laws. Participation was governed by strict rules connoting social obligation and reciprocation. Both types of reciprocity referred to in the literature were widespread in the Nuba Mountains area, viz, 'generalised' reciprocity and 'balanced' reciprocity (see Ziche and Salih, 1987; cf Sahlins, 1972). Generalised reciprocity is manifest in 'expectations' of help during times of stress or need, especially between close kin and neighbours. Balanced reciprocity, on the other hand, is more strict and is undertaken under the principle of rational economic claculation with respect to the 'instances of participation' of an individual in another's nafeir. In this type the individual can at any time claim back his effort from community members who happened to have summoned him for specific agricultural

tasks. Such economic calculation underpinning balanced reciprocity, therefore, takes place where "more accurate accounts over services rendered to each other are kept and debits and credits have to [be] balanced within acceptable periods of time" (Ziche and Salih, 1987:137). Theoretically speaking, the difference between the two forms of reciprocity is a matter of degree and the two can in practice overlap. But generalised reciprocity tends to prevail among close kin and neighbours (cf Sahlins, 1972).

In the case of the Nuba peasants, communal labour organisation not only implies the pooling of effort (ie abstract labour) but also expanding the scope of the labour process by infuencing the forces of production. This obtains from the fact that a nafeir organiser summons not only the groups' labour, but also their implements. It has been the convention that in the Nuba Mountain area a participant brings his own agricultural implements with him. One may do so even if not asked (Nadel, 1947). Depending on his convenience it may happen that a peasant favours using a particular kind of tool rather than using someone else's.

Ritual display also enters communal work participation in the Nuba hills area. In the immediate past, work in a priest's nafeir was socially as well as economically valued. Spiritual satisfaction draws from one's 'nearness' to holy men, the manipulators of good and the disposers of benevolence. Religious incantations performed by a priest, or a so-called Kujur, on behalf of the community or a

particular individual are believed to ensure a favourable future and better material rewards. In the context of agriculture this ritual performance is related to increasing agricultural productivity and output (Nadel, 1947). For this reason an individual would participate in a priest's nafeir even if not personally asked. Rain-making is also a pre-requisite for a prospective agricultural season. In addition to rain-making a priest was also believed to have the ability to ward off pests, birds and locusts. The priest's attachment with and manipulation of the sky's spirits would ultimately influence these spirits to release plenty of rain. The spirits of the earth, on the other hand, shoulder the responsibiity of warding off and minimizing environmental hazards.

The priests, however, do not participate in communal work. This is related to the fact that the nature of their activity necessitates privacy and seclusion. But this does not mean that priests are exploiting nafeir labour without contributing to the morality of reciprocity. By ritual performance the priest is actually contributing to that objective. For this reason the priest was not treated on an equal footing with rich farmers who were accused of failure to reciprocate in communal labour. While the priest is physically absent from active nafeir, his ritual contribution could be fully appreciated by the community. The place ritual performance occupy in the social life of the Nuba, and with special reference to agriculture, is succinctly stated in Nadel's monograph as follows -

> "Every important phase of the agricultural year is accompanied by some ritual event which similarly transforms rational motives into supernatural promises. Signals for coordinated and well-planned efforts become repeated sacred guarantees against failure and misfortune. These rituals may be of a very specific and detailed nature as in Haiban or in Koalib, when nearly every cultivated plant and every phase of its cultivation have their separate rites, their own priestly experts, and command special magic gestures symbolic of the growth which these rites are meant to ensure... In most tribes priests are charged with fixing the date of these 'signal rites' and organising the beginning of the agricultural activity which the rites are meant to satisfy" (Nadel,1947:44).

A priest may have his farm weeded without even his knowledge. This would be done for reasons of loyalty for the expiation of one's sins or ritual failure. From the view point of ideology, Marxists would argue that such 'alliance' with the priest functions to mask the exploitative relations between the priest and the communal group. The argument is based on the examination of the economic relations of production and exchange embedded in nafeir recruitment. However, exploitation judged on the part of the individual actor may be entirely non-existent. While Marxists emphasize the material aspect of any transaction, an actor would be in a position to weight the ritual satisfaction over the material rewards. In respect of

different strategies of allocating labour, to opt for one choice or another is a matter of the individual's sole value judgement rather than of an external observer.

There is also another aspect of the nafeir which relates to the ritual domain. Sanctions against failure to participate in a priest's nafeir differ from those regarding the nafeir of an ordinary individual. In the case of a priest's nafeir the sanction is levied less socially than spiritually. The priest was believed to control and affect both the material and non-material aspects of the Nuba mode of life. His spirits would at any time inflict misfortune on misdemeanour. This would cause severe illness whose treatment would lie with the priest himself (see Baumann, 1987). The individual suffering the affliction of spirits is therefore obliged to attach himself to the priest. Such notions tend to uphold the communal labour system's smooth functioning, for the benefits of the priest and, presumably the other participants.

Another type of dealing obtaining in the nafeir system of labour organisation relates to bride-service (Nadel, 1947; Faris, 1987). Once an individual gets betrothed his relationship with his in-laws is remodelled and governed by specific rules and social sanctions. Such an individual's labour becomes part and parcel of his in-laws' labour, which could be pooled at any time to accomplish specific tasks (eg in-laws' nafeir). A betrothed young male was required to participate in many of his in-laws' activities

without, however, being rewarded. His labour was, in effect, considered part of the bride-price he was obliged to secure in respect of his future wife. The length of time spent in bride-service varied, depending on the age at which a person was betrothed, his ability to accumulate enough wealth within a relatively short or long span of time, his parent's help in providing bride-wealth and the conventional age of marriage (for both sexes) set by the community. Faris (1987:72) estimates the minimum bride-service period to be as high as five years, on the assumption that adulthood starts traditionally at 12-13 and marriage normally occurred at 18-20 years of age.

Work in bride-service ranges from simple agricultural tasks such as winnowing, sowing and threshing, to heavy work such as digging and weeding. Off-farm work consisted of repairing agricultural implements, repairing beds, house thatching, or fence building. Such obligations relating to marriage and its binding rules could also, again, be denounced by Marxists as ideologically masking some sort of exploitative relations. It was very difficult for a betrothed male to contravene the rules of bride-service as these are linked to a web of adverse consequences. The community's overall evaluation of the betrothed's relationship with his in-laws tends to reinforce the notion of compliance. The Nuba used to relate the matter to considerations of honour, a value which is the hallmark for the whole Sudanese community. Bride-service, therefore, came to directly affect one's reputation (see Faris, 1987).

While an acquiescent betrothed was reputed to have diligence and manliness, a non-compliant was subject to rejection on the part of his in-laws. With regard to the latter case, an individual whose attempt at marriage had been declined would have a much more limited chance of being accepted as a husband in the future. Yet, is bride-service really exploitative? That it need not by any means be seen as such comes from the fact that it may also be seen (by the actors) that bride-service labour constitutes one component of the marriage transactions, a result of which was that the betrothed man gets a wife.

Due to considerations of shame, the decision to get betrothed in the Nuba community had to be made with circumspection. This is also because bride-service often conflicted with one's own allocation of time. It might happen that a betrothed man should have to make a decision between working on his own farm or his in-law's. The opportunity cost of opting to work for his in-laws was the output forgone from his own farm. To work for in-laws was usually the favoured choice as it related to honour and reputation. The situation would be more complicated in a case where the betrothed had to decide between participating in a nafeir arranged for a close neighbour and that of a bride-service. If the decision went in favour of the latter, an excuse might be accepted, on grounds which the whole community agreed - in terms of priority of recruitment or of call for recruitment.

There was also some sort of variability in the labour one could summon on behalf of assisting in one's bride-service. The nafeir institution was involved here. Following from the full recognition of the importance of bride-service in the community at large, one would find it imperative to summon a neighbour's, friend's and age-mate's labour to help accomplish a specific task related to bride-service. Faris states that -

> "of course the personnel at any specific bride-service labour party is peculiar, and will change slightly, substantially, or even totally depending on the particular task, the size of the party, or specific temporal circumstances - though a group of age-mates from a specific village section may find themselves together frequently in various tasks" (Faris,1987:73).

The organisation of group labour on this basis does not imply the transfer of 'obligations' to the in-laws, though the labour has been organised by the betrothed on their behalf. The task group would usually debit such obligations at the expense of the betrothed alone even if the cost of beer, tea and meat is shared by the in-laws as well. This testifies to the variability and complexity of labour party organisation under bride-service conditions. It also tells how the rules of reciprocity tend to overlap and take a multiplicity of forms.

Marriage eventually alters the picture and increases the scope of reciprocal obligations on the part of in-laws (see

eg Nadel: 1947). The couple in neo-local residence, establish their own work group relationships which serve their own household's interests independently of the husband's in-laws. The father-in-law now comes to depend entirely on his own entitlements and obligations for the mobilization of communal labour. Marriage, therefore, announces the structuring of fresh social relationships within the community. This links with yet another matter. At any particular point in time the larger the number of betrothed daughters the more economically advantaged the household becomes. In this respect, the household's age/ sex profile is important in the first place. In the Nuba Mountains areas, as is the case with most parts of the Sudan (as I, being a citizen, know it), it is the male birth which is greatly valued. The male sets to work as early as seven years of age, doing the simple tasks such as running errands, bird-scaring on the farm, and planting. Contribution to household production and consumption tends to increase each time an individual male passes through adolescence. A household whose sex ratio is biased toward the male births is likely to contribute more to its subsistence and viability than one of a balanced sex ratio or one with a shortage of males. If we look at the development cycle of the household, the pattern of labour organisation becomes more complicated. Households with large numbers of females are not, in reality, completely denied youthful labour throughout the life cycle of the household. As females enter adolescence and get betrothed the economic condition of the household is altered. More

labour could be mobilized, not only by the betrothed's personal contribution in the form of labour, but also by his ability to organise communal labour for his in-laws as part of the 'bride-price'. Such a household's advantage expands as more of its females get betrothed. But, generally speaking, with the development of a household cycle a process of contraction and expansion becomes evident. As we said, marriage functions to restore the household to its previous equilibrium point. Thus, we may argue that in the context of the Nuba social structure, females play vital roles in maintaining household viability in terms of bride-service. Moreover, the viability of such a household obtains not only as a result of such labour mobilization, but also from the minimisation of expenditure. Meat, beer or porridge to entertain the nafeir workers are usually paid for by the betrothed.

The cost of labour mobilization on behalf of bride-service is threefold. First, there is the accumulated debt in terms of future obligations to reciprocate. The second is the opportunity cost of the betrothed's work in bride-service. And the third is the financial expenditure for the entertainment of participants. The betrothed gets rewards in terms of reputation and amicable relationships with his in-laws. In the near past it has become customary that celebrations during the harvesting season were, as we mentioned, to be monopolized by those who produced the maximum agricultural output (the so-called orinyate celebration). If the betrothed's in-laws happened to achieve

the orinyate, ie filled its granary to the brim, then he was likely to be honoured by the community as well as by his in-laws.

The male betrothed's family of orientation also incurs some cost. The ability of the household to mobilize its own potential labour becomes increasingly reduced as more and more of its males opt for betrothal. It is important that we look at bride-service at the level of the community at large. Every individual household is affected by the development cycle of its members. This development cycle is influenced by the conventional child-spacing as well as the birth order of the sexes. Islam requires that the lactation period be extended for two years, so it could follow that the child-spacing period be two years. Generally the shorter the child-spacing period for a household who happens to have too many male children in the birth order, the smaller the potential labour this household would lose in case the males got betrothed since the females would eventually get betrothed, thus being instrumental in restoring the lost labour. If a household whose daughter is betrothed delays her marriage, this means greater potential bride-service. The family of orientation of the betrothed male incurs more loss in terms of outflow of its labour potential due to this delayed marriage. This process of betrothal and delayed marriage is essential for understanding the transfer of advantages between all households, channelled through the system of communal labour and bride-service.

The contribution of bride-service to agricultural production may be seen to be quite significant from the fact that in respect of agricultural work put into traditional Nuba peasant farming, it is estimated that approximately nine mandays per household per annum are spent in threshing while 12 days are spent in weeding (Faris, 1987:77).

The Dissolution of Nafeir

More recently, the development of commercialism which in the Nuba Hills area was heralded by the introduction of rain-grown cotton schemes, has resulted in the rapid dissolution of the nafeir and its replacement by wage labour. As late as 1969 Faris noted the dissolution of nafeir among the class of priests. Only three priests were then reported to have been able to organise communal labour (1987:78). It is, however, worth mentioning that at this period of time the conditions of living in Sudan in general were deteriorating considerably, a state of affairs which led to the dethronement of the government and its replacement by the Nimeiri regime. In addition to the increasing commercialisation of agriculture, the rising prices of food products could be held responsible for the disintegration of the nafeir system. Another reason for the disintegration relates to the failure of the priests to carry on effectively their function of rain-making which was accentuated by the community's disregard of the priest's supernatural qualities. The Nuba people would even exercise sanctions over a priest's ritual behaviour, and would "chastise or even beat him should he fail in his ritual speciality" (1987:79).

Another influential class which traditionally tended to dominate communal labour with little, if any, reciprocity, were the policemen, chiefs and government officials (Nadel, 1947; Faris, 1987). The government servants and officials also include the Jellaba since their profession is always connected with administration. In the early period of the monetization of the Nuba economy the rich men came to substitute their 'obligatins' to nafeir workers with payment by tobacco (Faris, 1987:79) and later to hire wage labour instead (Nadel, 1947:57). By virtue of its financial standing, this class was able to manipulate communal labour for its own individual self-interest, thanks to the salaries the officials would monthly receive. At the time of Nadel's research the social repercussion of this socio-economic change were evidently imminent. The effect was that such changes "tend to further - and perpetuate - economic inequality" (1947:57).

Today the dissolution of the nafeir system in the Nuba Mountains region is empirically confirmed. One case has been reported of the pooling of group labour for working communally on commercial agriculture. Once paid, in kind or in cash, the wages were divided equally among the group. Faris, who documents the disintegration of this type of nafeir argues that "in 1980 labour recruiters came to the region to attempt to solicit young men to engage in this activity, but not with very much success" (1987:79).

By and large, the tendency towards the increasing commercialization of agriculture which in the past affected the mode of labour organisation and production has finally brought the nafeir system to its ruins. As Nadel (1947) noted the nafeir's tendency to increase inequality and to favour the rich in the wake of a monetized economy also meant that ideology of democracy was likewise put in jeopardy. The break up of the nafeir following the move toward commercialised agriculture has also affected and altered the previous form of bride-service. "This is no longer possible in modern conditions, for [the future bridegroom] will often be away from home on wage-labour" (Stevenson, 1984:105). For those reasons we would argue that in line with Hunter (1962), traditional communal forms such as the nafeir will become difficult to re-arouse since these forms died with the absence of the principle on which they were based. These conditions (according to Hunter, and as we have seen) which gave rise to the traditional communal forms were communal life and subsistence agriculture (1962:111). But also, under conditions of commercialism, the actors perceptions of the undesired inegalitarianism associated with 'traditional cooperation' will have been sharpened. It is for this reason, we argue, that the enthusiasm of the Nuba peasants for participation in cooperatives in the context of the Habila scheme has not been aroused.

To sum up, the dissolution of the nafeir system of traditional cooperation is a necessary outcome of the actors'

consciousness of its likely ominous consequences. Professor Nadel was able to forecast the change in the system of production and labour organisation from his understanding of the actors' socio-economic behaviour as well as from their perceptions. We should therefore understand the actors' rejection of the nafeir system as "a phenomenon that changed the pattern of traditional agriculture from one of comparatively large, cooperative, productive groups with a kin base to one of small farms" (cf Baric, 1967:275). So it is that Nuba peasants attach low priority to cooperatives today. We are able to substantiate this only insofar as our analysis is closely related to the actors perceptions as well as their meaningful behaviour. The persistence of the peasant mode of agricultural labour organisation and production which superceded the decline of the nafeir system may be well appreciated in the fact that peasant farming combined with hired wage labour form the optimal adaptation to the modern conditions whereby household viability can be guaranteed (see chapter 5). This new mode of life is irrevocable insofar as the actor's conception of the situation is concerned; Nadel argues as follows -

> "The steady growing numbers of labourers from the Nuba Mountains proves that the new demands have necessitated a completely new means of livelihood, which is bound to dislocate the customary organisation of production and partly even social organistion at large. [My emphasis] (1947:82).

There is one fact which is quite evident. The changes in social organistion allowed the Nuba peasants to exploit the new niche they occupied in such a way that potential costs implied by previous transactions could be avoided. The decision of a Nuba peasant presumably to strike an optimal balance that could assure him the procurement of the means of livelihood (without engendering revolutionary change which might jeopardize the security he derives from exploiting the different possibilities from the niche he is occupying), soley reflects his understanding of the alternative means open to him in any particular social situation. Under such circumstances rationality can be detected only insofar as the anthropologist is capable of understanding and thereby forecasting the individual's meaningful socio-economic behaviour. In terms of rationality, it is clear that past Nuba pattern of behaviour and the present pattern are intimately interconnected. For similar argumentation, some anthropologists state that -

> "we know that the traditional cultivator is in fact capable of rational decisions and motivations; and when he marks time, it is often because within the existing agrarian system he has no margin for risk taking and no access to proper rewards; because the innovations offered do not appear to him appropriate, or because he has actually had <u>previous unhappy experience</u> with a similar pattern" [my emphasis] (Weintraub and Margulies, 1984:42).

To substantiate our claim that the dissolution of the traditional nafeir system is partly responsible for the present-day Nuba peasantry's lack of enthusiasm for Habila cooperatives, we must make a retrospective analysis (or in other words, interpolate). The importance of this analysis derives from the fact that a sceptical anthropologist would be glad to know if modern agricultural cooperatives could have proved a success (in terms of arousing people's enthusiasm) had the state implemented the scheme before the full development of commercialism in the Nuba economy. From my tracing back the past patterns of socio-economic changes which had taken place in the Nuba economy and social structure, the answer should be in the affirmative, other things remaining the same. When Nadel wrote about the Nuba, inequality, though imminent, had not been fully institutionalised. The few changes in the socio-economic system that had occurred were the introduction of money by the colonial administration; which later replaced the traditional barter system of exchange. The colonial government introduced the money economy for the purpose of extracting taxes from the Nuba peasantry. Cotton was encouraged both because it was a source of foreign revenue for the government which undertook its marketing; and because it provided a source of cash income for the immediate producers, thereby settling their tax payments. The first response on the part of the peasantry was the intensification of agriculture which led to increasing the scope of agricultural cultivation -

> "Large tracts of land are being worked, new crops have been introduced; and everywhere the cultivation is

still of the traditional kind, the new land in the plains on which it is practised, where weeds and grass grow faster than on the stony hillside and rain and watercourses constitute new dangers, demands more constant attention" (Nadel, 1947:56).

The above new pattern of readjustment reflects the individual's response in order to satisfy subsistence needs as well as to produce a surplus for the payment of taxes.

In the face of increasing demands of the modern economy and the expansion of cotton cultivation, communal labour, nafeir, was resorted to for the accomplishment of the various agricultural tasks concomitant with the process of intensification. "No Nuba farmer would think of planting cotton unless full granaries enable him to employ group labour" (1947:56). The new changes in the economic life of the community entailed the transformation of the nafeir institution to cope with the social change. More specifically, during the early 1940's (recall that inequality was not yet developed) the colonial government made an attempt to introduce modern agricultural cooperatives to increase the operational efficiency of the agricultural system. The colonial state was encouraged to initiate cooperatives by the presence of the nafeir which was fully active at that time. The Nuba peasantry demonstrated a positive response to the state initiative. A report on the Administration of Sudan (1950) has described the state of affairs as follows-

> "The object of the scheme in 1944 season was to discover the agricultural needs of the Nuba and to see how these needs could be applied on cooperative lines to large-scale agricultural settlements. The first season showed that the Nuba were capable of developing a real feeling of communal responsibility and cooperative effort" [emphasis mine] (1944:165).

This, arguably, testifies to our claim that the disappearance of the past ideology which legitimated the smooth functioning of communal labour, and which eventually led to the breakup of the nafeir, has today blocked the state's attempt to organise modern cooperatives for transforming traditional subsistence agriculture. Initially, the transformations which the nafeir system witnessed were the necessary outcome of modern changes to which it was actually adjusted. But later on this whole system became a fetter on the smooth functioning of the society which was traditionally grounded on the ideology of equality and democracy. The fact is that with the rapid commercialisation of agriculture particular classes, as we have seen, tended to manipulate nafeir labour for furthering their economic expansion. This in turn came to conflict with the rules of reciprocity and democracy. Communal labour for cotton cultivation interfered with the existing norms of social obligations and balanced cooperation. "The irregular distribution of cotton-growing in every Nuba tribe at once rules out strict reciprocity" (Nadel, 1947:56). Finally, and the factor which has perpetuated the inevit-

able dissolution of group labour among the Nuba peasantry, the permanence of economic inequality brought about by the utilisation by a minority class of group labour in cotton cultivation largely explains the peasant's unhappy previous experience with cooperation.

Today the nafeir provides additional sources of labour mobilisation only at the level of the kinship domain and that of closely-knit neighbours. As social distance (due to inequality) is becoming wider the only avenue which can provide security for the individual is to cling to one's kin group. A number of anthropologists have emphasized that in times of crisis it is kinship that is primarily invoked for help and security (Colson, 1971). Participation in the Habila scheme today both in cooperatives and the private schemes is confined to the same upper strata that had traditionally acquired the privileged position in the Nuba socio-economic structure.

CHAPTER 7

The Importance of Building on Local Institutions as a Pre-requisite for Rural Development

This chapter intends to make an extrapolative analysis for examining the importance of building on the traditional institutions, such as the nafeir, as a pre-requisite for rural development. Linking rural development programmes with the pre-existing institutional forms is commonly cited in development literature in terms of concepts such as enthusiasm and popular participation. One reason is that rural development schemes, as we have argued in chapter 2, too often fail to provide real benefits to the target population. The target group which is meant to be directly affected by planned programmes often suffer deterioration: there is no fundamental improvement in the total socio-economic structure of the rural society. One factor which keeps peasants from effectively participating in state-designed schemes, again repeatedly cited in the literature, is the peasants' lack of confidence in such attempts, their view being that such schemes would not benefit them (Huizer, 1971; Hunter, 1962; Worsley, 1971).

Hunter (1962) seems to be pessimistic about the relevance of old traditions and about policy-making relying on peasant enthusiasm for project design, and describes such enthusiasm as a "wasting asset" (1962:111). One example Hunter cites refers to the Ibo of Eastern Nigeria. In this society almost every village was found to be contributing

free labour, material, and also cash for state-initiated schemes for improving village infrastructure such as bridges and the building of markets. Despite such an encouraging atmosphere upon which to launch development programmes, Hunter argues that there is the danger that such enthusiasm be exploited. He maintains that -

> "the essence of local enthusiasm is in achieving something which local people urgently want, which genuinely expresses their need, not in labouring on part of a scheme conceived by a distant government" (1962:111-112).

Too often when planners design programmes of change which claim to have some relevance to the pre-existing communalistic institutions, it is the materialistic aspect of cooperation that is stressed. There exists ample literature which shows that traditional cooperation have ideological underpinnings which may transcend materialistic overtones. Worsley, for example, states that cooperation can refer to -

> "an ideological commitment, and in this sense we rightly think of cooperation as a special kind of institution because its policies and arrangements are conditioned (negatively) by limitations on individualism and competition and (positively) by stress upon mutual aid, the common good - at the extreme, socialist ideals of social production and/or social appropriation, of equality and participatory democracy" [his emphasis] (Worsley, 1971:24).

The ideology underlying mutual aid and cooperation in its spontaneous (traditional) form differs from that of state-designed cooperativism in that in planned cooperativism economic interests rule over the social and psychological. Furthermore, and in line with Worsley, modern agricultural cooperatives have contradictory demands in fostering democratic participation and in getting peasants to work with unfamiliar partners which can render cooperative development a difficult task. We have seen in the context of the Habila scheme that the majority of scheme owners are officials, police and Jellaba coming from other provinces of Sudan. As regards this last state of affairs, Saul has shown, in respect of cooperatives in Tanzania, that corrupt officials formed the basic obstacle to efficient operation of cooperatives. He showed that a minority of influential officials tended to manipulate cooperatives to expand their economic standing at the expense of the poor (Saul, 1971).

Joy (1971), however, argues that generalisations on whether the existence of some social factors can be conducive to state-initiated projects can be of little practical value. The danger inherent in generalisation is that the same factors which we attempt to generalise about are either uncontrolable or have too simple criteria by which to be identified (1971:62). He gives an example from Tanzania where cooperatives are viewed by officials as alternatives to private capitalist enterprise and are advocated for the simple reason that they can encourage desired attitudes between individuals and groups. It is argued that changing

inter-group attitudes works to "pose extra, rather than different, criteria for success, for business efficiency criteria will still need to be met" (1971:62). If we are to come up with guidelines for policy-making, Joy suggests, we have to be able to specify the alternative organisational forms which can relate to the relevant technical, economic and social factors. This necessitates examining -

> "how far past failures have been due to promoting cooperation in appropriate social environments and how they have been due rather to failure to understand how to design and manage cooperative enterprises in ways which recognise the significance of social - and for that matter technical and economic - factors in particular situations" (1971:62).

In chapter 6, we have, in effect, dealt with the obverse of this, showing how past success of cooperatives was due to favourable social and economic environments (see page 167). it is to the type of analysis described by Joy which we now turn in an attempt to provide guidelines for policy-making. Focus will be put on identifying solidary and egalitarian characteristics relevant for sound economic planning.

The break-up of the traditional system of cooperation has opened up new opportunities for maintaining household viability (eg labour migration and hired labour). The peasant keeps his bildat holding outside the Habila scheme and combines bildat cultivation with hiring out his labour

to the scheme, or, otherwise, engaging in seasonal migration. According to Worsley, and indeed as I have argued, "it is wrong to label such prudence 'conservatism': it is simply rational, calculative instrumentalism (1971: 24). But I infer that the break-up of the nafeir became an 'invocation instance' in that previous bad experience with cooperation could be mentioned whenever new attempts aimed at building modern cooperatives are made. This has been perpetuated by the low frequency of inter-marriage between the poor Nuba and rich merchants and farmers, some of whom are Arabs (see eg Baumann, 1987:469). Inter-marriage is hindered by two factors. Economically, the Nuba peasants, due to low productivity of agriculture, cannot afford to pay bride-wealth. The latter is increasing astronomically with the development of the modern economy and the rapid commercialisation of agriculture. The second factor relates to ethnic differences and differences in rates of literacy and material culture between the Arabs and the indigenous people.

For cooperatives to be successful, recruitment should, logically, be on the basis of equality, thus implying the exclusion of outsiders, rich merchants and farmers. Baumann has noted that Miri Bara in the further southward part of the Nuba Mountains region exhibit a pattern in cooperative development where membership was recruited on the basis of kinship loyalty; and that this village managed to resist the spread of wage employment in traditional agriculture. This resistance in turn became a limiting factor in the

spread of the money economy and trade. The village has therefore to be dependent on its local human and material resources for its own development. With this objective of self-reliance Miri Bara villagers could succeed with the establishment of a cooperative flour mill by relying on a kinship-based membership. The cooperative is presided over by Miri-born teachers and local farmers who are elected by village people. Baumann argues that such a cooperative has become an example on which development is to be based -

> "when in subsequent years, more and more villagers felt the need for a small shop within the village, the flour mill was often invoked as a reminder that innovation was possible, and worked at its best, if outside merchants were kept outside" (1987:469).

Kinship solidarity, thus worked to foster modern cooperatives rather than to impede village development. The village also harnessed kinship solidarity to mobilise domestic labour in line with the traditional nafeir system. This was possible because an existing village norm was validated, viz, that, in Baumann's words, "cash payments within the community were seen as violating the interests of all concerned" (1987:469), for -

> "it would insult a paid fellow villager by treating him like an outsider, and, to his employer, would amount to an admission of being without kin or friends" (1987:469).

Another reason for the successful development of the co-operative flour mill in Miri is that due to its relative isolation from the major trading towns (eg Kadugli, Dilling, etc), the influence of outsiders in the local village economy was minimal (cf Riches, 1977). Traders gained little advantage from getting access to the village since its precarious market and trade, and the villagers' objective of self-reliance, imply high transportation costs and limited demand for external goods. This is further accentuated by the villagers' attitude toward outsiders, coupled with the pre-existing spirit of pride and competition. Such opposition on the part of insiders to outsiders was a necessary reaction against the tendency of farmers to export investment resources to urban centres outside the boundaries of the Southern Kodofan region, the logic of which would be to hinder institutional development in the interests of progressive outsiders. The magnitude of such capital expatriation could be seen from what Omer has to say about the situation -

> "While this is only natural for the free movement of capital, what it does mean however is that what remains of that capital to be reinvested in the region is only that sum which makes that investment just viable" Omer, 1982:24).

Yet a success in cooperativism in the Nuba Mountains area is the exception rather than the rule. Baumann argues elsewhere (Baumann, 1980) that in the same village, ie Miri, an agricultural production cooperative has been

attempted in the 1980's as a means to foster village development. As a sound basis for cooperative development the pre-existing flour-mill which was established through self-help initiative was to be extended and incorporated to form a full-fledged modern cooperative. But as in the case with other parts of Sudan in general, the undertaking started with the appointment of a committee composed of two distinct groups. The first category included the school-educated elite who presided over the committee; the second category included local farmers to represent the grassroots level. According to Baumann it was thought that such representation would be of much help in respect of promoting the village cooperative, for two reasons. The school-educated elite on the one hand might solicit government assistance (credit facilities, tax exemptions, etc) thanks to its high standing which enables them to get things done. Local farmers, on the other hand, were touted in view of their having strong local support, with the aim of stimulating effective grassroot participation in the project. However, grassroot participation was hindered by communication bottlenecks involved in discussion-meetings between committee members and the public. In the modern context, traditional ijtimaa (meeting) separates local people from the committee since it was highly formalized and hierarchical in nature. The consequence of this division was that farmers found it very difficult to offer their own suggetions and state their problems. Differences in literacy rates between committee members and the public further blocked effective communication. There exists some

difference between the modern version of institutions for decision-making and the traditional version. With the latter, Baumann posits, power is usually wielded by local shaikhs who arrive at conclusive decisions in an egalitarian fashion involving all members. So when it was recongised that the two groups were promulgating conflicting objectives, the idea of proceeding with the cooperative was repealed. It became apparent to the majority of small farmers that the elite's objective of commercialising the production cooperative did not match their objective of subsistence production. Baumann states it succinctly -

> "Typically, the school-educated elite are cash-oriented, possess capital, however minimal, rather than time, will or expertise for agricultural labour, and rely on immediate market returns, rather than the preservation of land as a viable resource. By contrast, the village farmers, living on the subsistence of their own fields, can mobilise labour, rather than invest in cooperative shares, and depended for their future on the preservation of soil fertility" (1980:2).

A similar case has been presented by Abdel Ghaffar (1977b) for the Berta and Watawit in the Southern Funj in Sudan. The Watawit are progressive farmers and rich immigrant merchants in contrast to the Berta who are predominantly subsistence cultivators. By virtue of their advantageous economic standing the Watawit managed to wield power and so serve their own particular interests. Being a homogeneous

group, the Berta devised communal labour (nafeir) for accomplishing those peak agricultural operations which are labour demanding (eg harvesting and weeding). Merchants, and rich farmers do not usually take part in communal labour. In the 1950's the state made an attempt at introducing mechanised schemes for the development of the area. The basic assumption had been made that the existing institution of communal labour would provide a sound basis on which new agricultural cooperatives could be established. As a matter of fact the scheme proved a failure since, Abdel Ghaffar argues, it did not provide for grassroots interests and ideas about development.

Later on modernisation schemes aimed towards benefiting the lower strata have been introduced in this area. This alternative was met with popular participation and could contribute to rural development. The new approaches stressed the exclusion of outsiders and the integration of the values, and beliefs of local people into modern cooperative institutions. Thus the main reason behind the successful mobilisation of communal labour for the promotion of rural development is stated by Abdel Ghaffar as follows -

> "this [success] is mainly due to the fact that village members feel that it is consistent with their way of organising production and therefore it will lead to improvement of their lives without having any drastic effect on the distribution of production. In other

words its effects on social relations and social structure of the units in general is not negative" (Abdel Ghaffar, 1977b:65).

The implications of this is that the success of the modern cooperative is dependent upon its ideological imprint: the more stressed and the more real are the similarities between traditional and modern cooperation the more likely is the acceptance by local people. This necessitates the minimization of social costs concomitant with so-called modernisation values. Where local elites side with their kinship groups (eg Miri flourmill); where outsiders' influence on local affairs is minimal and the village economy is less monetized (as we have argued in chapter 6), traditional institutions are more likely to be conducive to rural development (see Worsley, 1971). Even so a state of affairs where various kinship groups identify with village-wide interests in the successful promotion of cooperatives, as in Miri, may not always be generalised for other situations. Riches (1977) has examined the possibility of cementing kin-based groups into larger communities in respect of a state-directed cooperative among the Canadian Eskimo. The author showed that despite the cooperative ideals which aimed at building on Inuit values of egality and relations of kinship the cooperative proved a failure. The main reason was the development of a tendency for particular kin-groups to distort the cooperative by favouring their own members, thus contravening the stated ideals (see Riches, 1977).

An exceptional case, where traditional communal labour was conducive to individual advancement is the one presented by Barth (1967) for the Fur society in Darfur province in western Sudan. Barth indicated that the Fur economy is largely dependent on subsistence agriculture whose labour is mobilised in the form of work parties, "through the brewing of beer, labour is mobilised in direct proportion to the millet invested" (Barth, 1967:164), but labour cannot be directly exchanged for millet. The Fur society also attracts middlemen from the neighbourhood who specialise in the production of garlic, tomatoes, onions or wheat. However, the relationship between these outsiders and the Fur subsistence farmers is not antagonistic nor does it involve the dominance of one group by another. It happened that an Arab from the neighbourhood; who is commercial-minded was able to succeed in recruiting communal labour, rewarded the labourers with beer, and the surplus product was marketed at higher prices in the urban markets. The strategy this Arab merchant had adopted was based on buying millet from the local market at a very low price for the brewing of beer to be served for the participant labourers. As a cash crop tomato was cultivated with the assistance of communal labour. Later on the local Fur farmers followed the merchant's example with spectacular success (see Barth, 1967).

However, Barth's case cannot be generalised in respect of the social arrangements of the cooperatives with which we are dealing. First, the case applies to an individual vis-a-vis other groups, in contrast to the cooperative arrange-

ments which are basically collective in form. Secondly, the individual Arab, since he complied with the existing rule of reciprocity was justified in mobilising communal labour for profit maximisation. Thirdly, and more importantly, the Fur society was undergoing rapid socio-economic transformation at the time the entrepreneurial activity was flourishing. Finally, all members of the society had equal access to labour resources; and hence the same possibilities of individual advancement were open to all.

The case presented by Abdel Ghaffar about the Funj people squarely fits with the Habila scheme in the early phases of scheme implementation. From discussion which I had with a post-graduate student at Omdurman (October 1987) who happened to be visiting the scheme area in the early 1970's, concerning the response of the grassroots to the introduction of cooperatives, I gained the following impression -

> "The agricultural Bank of Sudan established an office at Dilling, the district headquarter, to provide credit for small farmers to promote agricultural development. The credit facilities were meant as payments for land clearance, harvesting and weeding costs. Its objective was to raise the level of incomes among small farmers living in the area. At first the Nuba farmers rejected the innovation on the ground that the idea was completely new to them; because local people themselves were not aware of what the Bank actually offered. This happened during the early years of the Nimerei regime (1970). Shortly

after this, a few small farmers started to be more receptive and applied to the Merchanised Farming Corporation for land and credit provisioning. The majority of these applicants opted for private farming and these happened to be a class of rich farmers and Jellaba coming from outside Habila. Only a negligible number of the small farmers opted for cooperatives. In actuality the membership of such small farmers in the cooperatives was only presented insofar as they had a legal claim in the cooperative assets. Real participation in the running of cooperatives was entirely absent. Small farmers found themselves alienated from their produce which was not stored and marketed through the formal channels of cooperative board. In addition, the business-like nature of the institution requires at least some basic knowledge about 'accountancy'. This, the small Nuba farmers do not have. Eventually a considerable proportion of these farmers started to opt out of the agricultural cooperatives with the consequence that the Bank recorded that defaulting was endangering its lending capacity."

Affan's (Affan, 1978) examination of the existing agricultural cooperatives at work in 1976 substantiates and corroborates my informant's observation. Affan presents the following table which reports the major job of farm owners:

Table 9
Functional Classification of Farm Owners by Major Job

Major Job	% of farm owners
Farmers	11
Cooperatives	6
Non-farmers	83

n = 18

NB: The cooperative was for members of the Police force in Dilling

Source: Affan (1978), p38.

As stated in the table, the existing cooperatives do not belong to the Nuba peasants, rather they are owned by the police force residing in the district headquarter - Dilling. We have also indicated in chapter 4 that the co-operatives, in 1982, were experiencing liquidation on the part of the scheme management.

By and large, the cases presented in the foregoing lead to some conclusions about the relevance and/or importance of traditional institutions to rural development planning. Inspite of the varying focus of cooperative programmes and the differences in social and economic circumstances, there are some general features. First, national or locally initiated plans to foster cooperative development are invariably looked askance at by the so-called receivers of development inputs. Secondly, the cases reveal some regularities as regards experiences with traditional co-operation. The cases, also, corroborate Baumann who insists that development must be "subject to social choices and agricultural values proper to the developing community itself" (Baumann, 1984:459).

The general pattern is a reflection of the client's - indeed we should say the actor's - capacity to adjust to the content of development resources such that an opportunity to benefit is created. This is revealed for the Nuba peasants who engage in labour migration or combine bildat cultivation with hiring out their labour in the scheme as a rational strategy. For Miri Bara, kinship solidarity represented the adjustment mechanism whereby the Miri-born educated teachers could successfully intervene so as to create a healthy atmosphere for the flour-mill cooperative. The Berta, for their part, were able to exclude outsiders and succeed with their production cooperatives.

In the Habila scheme failure to exclude outsiders impelled the Nuba farmers to opt out. Small farmers could easily distinguish the potential clients of development projects according to well-defined criteria. These include farm income, degree of subsistence orientation, ethnic group membership, progressiveness, social relationships and geographical location. The sort of adjustment, or rather, strategy on the part of small farmers for benefitting from the scheme (despite refusing to actively lease land in the scheme) is to get involved in seasonal migration as hired workers in the scheme. But on the other hand we have seen that this practice works to limit expansion in bildat cultivation since it diverts labour from agriculture.

Small farmers are of the belief that rich farmers are competitive and that indiscriminate participation in the

scheme would entail less potential benefits. Outsiders are viewed as having an advantage over local people in terms of the availability of inputs, market opportunities, information exposure and risk aversion (see Garforth, 1982). It follows, then, that small farmers confronted with programmes aimed at their betterment, are in a position to identify potential participants in terms of what they meaningfully categorise as 'notionally eligible' or otherwise (1982:49). The costs and benefits of participation are weighed prior to decision-taking and could therefore influence the success of the project. We should also establish that the actor's decision is governed by the underlying principle which states that -

> "where group membership is voluntary and the initiative to form groups comes from elements within the community rather than from the whole community, there is a possibility that progressive farmers will still benefit (1982:56).

This implies that locality alone is not sufficient for us to infer that there exists a 'community of interests', and that development inputs would ultimately be equitably distributed among receivers. We finally conclude that "however suitable a foundation a traditional system apparently provides it will inevitably contain elements 'dysfunctional' for cooperative development" (Riches, 1977:215).

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